

The Life of Sacrifice.

A COURSE OF LECTURES

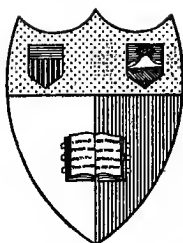
DELIVERED AT

ALL SAINTS', MARGARET STREET,

IN LENT, 1864.

BY THE REV. T. T. CARTER, M.A.,

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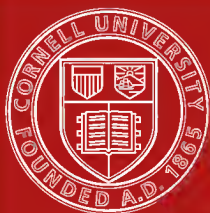
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LONDON:

JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET,
AND NEW BOND STREET.

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LONDON :
PRINTED BY JOSEPH MASTERS AND SON,
ALDERSGATE STREET.

TO THE
CLERGY OF ALL SAINTS',
IN GRATEFUL AND AFFECTIONATE COMMEMORATION
OF THE
TRUE WITNESS WHICH THEY ARE GIVING BEFORE THE CHURCH
OF THE
FULNESS AND BEAUTY OF THE DIVINE SERVICE,
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED.

NOTICE.

I OWE the greatest obligations in the composition of the following Lectures, to Mr. Freeman's exposition of the sacrificial system of the Mosaic covenant, in his second Volume of the "Principles of Divine Service." His explanations and suggestions have been freely used, and form the basis of many portions of these Lectures.

I have also derived valuable aid from "Jukes on the Offerings," a book that makes one long that the devout and thoughtful author had seen as clearly the connexion between the Levitical system and the Sacraments of the New Covenant, as between it and our LORD's Person and saving work.

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LECTURE I.

THE DEATH-VEIL.

ISAIAH xxv. 7.

“AND HE WILL DESTROY IN THIS MOUNTAIN THE FACE OF THE COVERING CAST OVER ALL PEOPLE, AND THE VAIL THAT IS SPREAD OVER ALL NATIONS.”

THE final triumph of our Lord through His Incarnation meeting and overcoming death, is the subject of the prophecy of which this verse forms a part. The vail meant is the mortuary vail, the covering spread over the face of a deceased person, and it is applied to the condition of mankind separated from God, the spiritual death which after the Fall spread itself over the whole human race. The explanation of the figure is given in the verse immediately following, where the idea is simply expressed, “He will swallow up death in victory.” The spreading of this vail of death over the face of man, hiding from him the vision of God, is clearly described in the history of the Fall, as the direct consequence of disobedience. “In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.”¹ But how death, and its manifold consequences of sorrow, was ever suffered to arise within the creation of God, this is not revealed. All those deep searchings of heart, which

¹ Gen. ii. 17.

his addressing Eve. There is evidence, also, in the Scriptures, that before the creation of man, Satan had power on the earth. The state of the earth before the present creation, "without form and void, and darkness on the face of the deep,"¹ does not read like a work of God; rather like a ruin of some better work, and probably was the result of the fall of the angels, the wreck of the storm which, overthrowing them, left its scars even on this solid globe.

That Satan held a high pre-eminence in this terrestrial world, that, although dislodged from it, in his fall, he resumed his hold upon it and its inhabitants, when through his temptation they joined him against God in the same transgression,—this, whatever be the mysterious cause, seems manifest. The description given in Holy Scripture of Satan, as the "god of this world;"² "the ruler of the darkness of this world;"³ "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience,"⁴ leading them "captive at his will;"⁵ and again, as "the strong man armed keeping his palace,"⁶—such passages unquestionably involve the idea of pre-eminence. But the causes of Satan's power, and of his sin, and of death, its dark and dreadful doom, are alike shrouded in the secrets of eternity antecedent to the history of man; and the Bible stretches not back into that pre-existent state. It opens assuming the existing facts of sin, of forfeited vocations, and of death. It finds them, it does not account for them; it only shows how the plague was caught, and spread among men.

But it has been a prevailing tradition, and there are passages in Holy Scripture clearly harmonizing with the

¹ Gen. i. 2.

² 2 Cor. iv. 4.

³ Eph. ii. 2.

⁴ Eph. ii. 2.

⁵ 2 Tim. ii. 26.

⁶ S. Luke xi. 21.

belief, that the fall of the angels was involved in their resisting God's purpose of becoming Incarnate in man's nature, rather than in their own. It has been believed that the purpose of God to take, not "the nature of angels," but "the seed of Abraham;"¹ that "He," CHRIST, as Man, "in all things should have the pre-eminence;"² "that in Him," as Man, all "the fulness of the Godhead should dwell bodily;"³ "that by Him," as Man, "the FATHER would reconcile all things to Himself, whether they be things on earth, or things in Heaven,"⁴—that these designs of unutterable glory destined to be fulfilled in our nature, in preference to their own, awakened in them that resistance, the fruit of pride, to which Scripture avowedly ascribes their fall, pride maddening these great "principalities, and powers,"⁵ against God, and precipitating them against His irresistible will before which they hopelessly fell.

The supposition that this pride was stirred by the announcement of God's purpose to raise up man nearest to Himself, may account for that dire and relentless enmity with which they assaulted man as soon as he was formed, and for the subtle deceits with which they have ever sought the ruin specially of every one distinguished by the favour of God, and also for the malice and restless hostility which rose to its height in compassing the destruction of Him Who at last appeared, accomplishing the Divine purpose of the Incarnation which had at first awakened their daring and proud antagonism.

This same truth explains to us the original intended destiny of man, and the reason of the solemn charge given to our first father. He was put into the garden

¹ Heb. ii. 16.

² Col. i. 18.

³ Col. ii. 9.

⁴ Col. i. 20.

⁵ Eph. vi. 12.

of Eden, to "dress it, and keep it."¹ Mark the express injunction, "*keep it*,"—keep it evidently against the expected attacks of a designing foe, keep his home, the scene of his development, and so his own life, safe from the destroyer; and for what? Surely it was a noble destiny for which man was urged to be faithful. He was to keep himself pure, to observe the law of his vocation, and the purpose of his Creator, to use his powers for their ordained ends, to be faithful to the light within him for a fixed period of time, as a probation, with the certain prospect that he would then be united with God, and become the head of the creatures, the central being in whom all the glory of the creation would meet, the one creature in whom alone God would abide by a personal union. God needed to select one creature to be the basis on which to build up, and embody, the transcendent idea of a union between Himself, the Uncreated, and created natures; and for this amazing blessedness and glory He predestinated man. To correspond with this design, to fit himself for it, when the fulness of time should come, was the meaning of the charge to "keep" himself, and his earthly home, safe against the encroachments of the fallen angel who had rebelled against this Divine purpose.

Probably, moreover, it was intended that the evil which had entered the creation of God, should be subdued through man, as God's chosen agent in the contest. God purposed to destroy the power of evil, not by a direct exercise of His own power, but through the instrumentality of a creature whom He would endue with supernatural strength for this end. Man may have been raised up "to resist the devil," not

¹ Gen. ii. 15.

for his own sake only, but for the glory of God, for the sake of the entire creation. That Satan is finally to fall under CHRIST, as Man; that already overcome by Him in the flesh, he is at last to be "bruised in his head," the very seat of life, by the "seed of the woman;" that the final condemnation upon him and his host, is to be pronounced by the Saints who, enthroned with CHRIST, shall "judge Angels,"—these truths already proclaimed in the Scriptures, point to the fact that the human conquest of Satan, and the overthrow of evil by man, was part of his original destiny. What he failed to do in himself, he will at last accomplish in CHRIST. The purpose of God will not fail, nor will the worlds which Satan's transgressions ruined, fail to be rescued from the curse, though in order to accomplish the Divine purpose, humanity must be raised above itself by the indwelling and inworking of God.

It is generally thought that the visions foreshadowing the Incarnation granted to holy men under the earlier dispensations, were only types to teach the world at large the certainty of the glory that should afterwards be fulfilled. They were undoubtedly given for this end, but it was not their only purpose. They were revealed to men who had kept their lives, at least in their main end, true, men of faith, of prayer and self-sacrifice, who thus prepared, however imperfectly, were capable of the Divine illumination, in order that they might see by faith the union of humanity with the Godhead, as its final destiny of bliss. But those visions were intended also to assure them of the certainty of the glory reserved for themselves, what they should personally possess, as their own future

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 3.

bliss, and with themselves, all who should inherit the same faith. The visions enabled them to realise the great truth for which they lived and suffered, to “endure, as seeing the Invisible;”¹ “faith,” being to them “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,”² guiding and sustaining them on their way during their trial-hour. Thus to Noah, when his faith and patience had been fully proved, the rainbow shone forth, his token of the light from heaven glittering through the watery drops of earth, the light of Godhead radiant in the tears of suffering Humanity, the Incarnation manifest in the Passion. Thus Abraham, so wonderfully sustained in lofty communings with God, “exulted,”³ as he beheld in the history of his “son, his only son, Isaac, whom he loved,”⁴ the manifestation of a more glorious life, to be fulfilled in his greater Offspring, even the “Day” of CHRIST, which “he saw, and was glad.” Thus, again, Jacob, although a lonely fugitive, yet bearing in his person the promise, the sacred heritage of his race, while he lay on the open waste with a stone for his pillow, in the visions of the night was gladdened as he beheld the union of heaven and earth, through the mystic ladder with its train of “angels, ascending and descending;”⁵ himself at its foot, the symbol of Humanity prostrate in its helplessness, and standing above it the very and true God, as One preparing to descend; the two Natures separated for a

¹ Heb. xi. 27.

² Heb. xi. 1.

³ S. John viii. 56, ἡγαλλιάσατο ἵνα ἴδῃ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐμὴν, lit. “he looked with eager exultation and desire to behold My day.” ἀγαλλιάω, præ gaudio exulto; hence, gestio, desiderio alicujus rei feror,—Schl. “The particle ἵνα, often serves to connect verbs of willing and desiring in New Testament words.” Words. in loc.

⁴ Gen. xxii. 2.

⁵ Gen. xxviii. 12.

time, but about to become one, and then to abide unchangeably one for ever. Thus again, Moses called forth from among his brethren to bear the burden of the rebellions of a "stiffnecked and gainsaying people," was strengthened for this momentous charge, by the vision of God, so vividly bright, that long after his descent from the Mount, his face shone with the radiance of the Presence, in which he abode "forty days and forty nights," so that "the people could not behold him for the glory of his countenance."¹ These are instances of the great truth, that even under the imperfect forms of the earlier covenant, the servants of God were sustained by the assurance of the Divine Nature entering within the sphere of Humanity, within their own personal life, breaking through and destroying the vail of death spread over the nations. Even the anticipation of this sure blessedness was enough to nurture and sustain a faith which could overcome the world.

The Saints of old lived upon the promise which, reflecting back the glory of our Lord's manifestation in the flesh, brightened their path of trial, and upheld them in their long waiting. It was their life, although the promise could not be fulfilled, till in the fulness of time One was found, so pure, so perfectly corresponding to the will of God, that He could in her unite Himself with our nature. The glory of Mary, why henceforth all generations call her blessed, is because through her pre-eminent sanctity the union of the Godhead and the manhood could find in her a fitting tabernacle. There was the fulfilment of the Divine purpose, because there was the fulfilment of the necessary fitness. She was "highly favoured," because she was found so

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 7.

faithful to the wonderful grace given to her, that the love of God toward the creatures could reach its highest development through her, its fitting channel and instrument.

It is the peculiar characteristic of our nature, that the presence of a higher being than our own is needed for its rest and its happiness. It would seem that the nature of Angels is more self-existent, feeding upon God indeed, and sustained by God, while ever beholding His Face, and so living in His light; but not admitting the indwelling of God, not needing God as an inward Presence, to be, as it were, the complement of their nature. It is not so with man; "It is not good for man to be alone." The union with the creature, which is the first application of this saying, is but the type of a higher union, which alone can meet a yet deeper need. Man's nature needs a higher nature than itself, to be its stay, its peace. A higher Presence than its own must enter within it, to become a part of itself, or there is a void, a loneliness.

"As the hart desireth the water brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God; my soul is athirst for God," is the inspired expression of this profound craving. These words do not imply a desire merely to see God, but to receive God into the nature of man, to indwell in him, as hunger desires food to satisfy it. So absolute is this law of man's needing a higher being to rule and to possess him, that if the Divine Presence reign not within the soul, this fearful consequence ensues,—where God cannot be, where union with God, the intended Indweller of our nature, is hindered, there the soul falls, by a fatal necessity, under subjection to the Angel who still¹ "worketh in

¹ Eph. ii. 2.

the children of disobedience." This is the burden of that fearful parable, where our LORD describes the soul "empty, swept, and garnished,"¹ and the spirit, after "walking through dry places," entering in "to dwell there:" empty, because man's nature is not meant to be alone, cannot live in himself alone, is not complete in himself; there is a void, and a higher Presence must pervade and fill it. If it be not God, who can it be? This parable—it is our LORD's own account of the terrible alternative—answers the question, none but Satan. Of one man alone is it said in the Book of God that, "after the sop Satan entered into him;"² but this isolated case is recorded only because it was the most momentous instance of a law which prevails whenever the veil of spiritual death is spread over and departs not from the soul. The dark veil may abide, or may return, and then becomes "the second death,"³ "twice dead,"⁴ to be the unchanging gloom of an endless separation from God; and then the soul, buried in the everlasting abyss, indwelt by lost angels, shares with them their last destiny of woe, as the true development of a like sin, and of communion with them in the innermost seat of life, binding the two together in a common alienation from God. As in the realms of light the indwelling Presence of the ever Blessed God abides within the saints, filling them with His fulness, directing and ruling them with a perpetual inspiration; even so where this Presence is wanting, within the folds of the veil of death, the lost soul is inhabited, pervaded, and ruled by the Angel of darkness, held captive by him for ever at his will.

¹ S. Matt. xii. 44.

² S. John xiii. 27.

³ Rev. ii. 11.

⁴ S. Jude 12.

From these facts concerning our state we may learn the secret of the struggle of life which is now going on within us. Some, craving after the Divine vision, longing for union with God, having the one pervading desire, to cast off the veil of separation which keeps the soul from seeing God, and possessing God, are striving to fulfil their vocation, to keep the way of the LORD, to discipline and train themselves, to bring every thought into subjection, to perfect holiness, to live by faith; and for what end? Not for its own sake; oh, no! Not as if aught in one's own nature, however high, however holy, could satisfy itself, or be one's end; but in order that they may be fitted for the Divine union, and that more and more of the Divine indwelling may possess them, as they become more assimilated to It in mind and will; and that this may hereafter be perfected, the soul's chiefest bliss, its truest glory. Such persons look for intimations of the Divine will wherever they may be found, for revelations of truth, and laws of love ever developing into new and enlarged forms of grace, and fresh methods of spiritual amendment, living by rules of spiritual discipline, and striving to overcome sin, all sin, so that the veil of death may continually be kept back, and finally destroyed; that the power of evil, which continually seeks to re-assert its ancient hold, may be resisted at every attempt; that through the precious Blood ever pleaded, and the grace of sacraments, the Divine aid thus invoked, may be ever ensured to stay the surges of the dreadful tides of sin, the subtle deceits of him who "hath the power of death," knowing that as there is a continual endeavour to destroy us, there must be a continual energy of life to stay the Evil one afar off. Such is one side of the

history of human society, secretly it may be, but surely working out its appointed destiny in the midst of us,—a destiny of final beatitude irreversible, because the LORD, Who is the Truth, hath spoken it.

There is another side of human life, to the consequences of which we cannot shut our eyes. When evil is openly allowed, and known disobedience admitted, none can doubt the results. The danger of self-deceit lies rather in the less palpable forms of sin. When evil customs are pleaded as an excuse for lax indulgence; when excitement succeeds excitement, when pleasure is ever first sought, or business followed as eagerly as pleasure; when the necessity of station, or use, or example, or mere weakness, is supposed a sufficient plea for questionable courses; when the soul scarcely ventures to look forward to the future, and all serious weighing of the momentous questions involved in it, all reckoning of consequences, is day after day postponed; when even although there may be no distinct and palpable sin on which you can put your finger, (for of manifest transgressions the consequence is certain,) yet without any outward stamp of wickedness there is no spiritual rule over the life, striving to subject the life to the will of God, no high aim sustained, no earnestness, no strength or sincerity of religious purpose, no self-sacrifice, no self-restraint over the weak points of character, no consistency with any high aim, no secret deep fervour of confession, and prayer and communion with God,—what can we suppose to be the real inner life of such souls, but that the Evil one, however imperceptibly, is using either the weak indulgence of passion, or the specious conventional usages of a mere worldly morality, to withdraw the soul from God, is steadily influencing the soul by

the human traditions which in general society have taken the place of the stern uncompromising laws of the Divine life, and is thus even in the Christian world re-asserting his ancient hold within the empty chamber of man's nature, and perhaps all the more readily where there is no startling sin forcing on the conscience the necessity of repentance, the very ease and fearlessness of these children of the more polished world only ensuring more fatally the truth that "the face of the covering cast over all people" has "blinded their eyes lest the light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST, Who is the Image of GOD, should shine upon them."¹ Holy Scripture employs a fearful expression when it speaks of "servants"² of sin,—if we take the original word in its full and proper sense, it is "slaves" of sin. There may be slaves bound by silken cords, and by trammels of courtly éase, as well as by ruder and seemingly stronger bonds; but let it be considered, how truly a thoughtless indulgence, an allowed weakness in the most heedless impulse of self, may be an encroachment of Satan, an avenue for more fatal assaults, and has ever been his chosen mode of approach; and that he is still "the god of this world," to overcome whom is possible only through the energy of the life of God reigning within the soul.

The eventful struggle between the two sides of human life, is felt more or less within all hearts; the strife between nature and grace, between the pleadings of human weakness and the exactions of the Divine perfections. The life of the natural self is ever tending to unite itself with the enemy of God, yielding readily to his seductions, and thus sinking under his control, while the darkness of the covering

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

² Rom. vi. 20.

cast over the nations, gathers over the soul, and shuts out the holy light, clouding over the natural conscience, so that at last the soul yields itself a ready prey to sins from which it once shrunk back with horror. It is only the light of God which can break through the darkness, the indwelling Life of One Who is mighty to save, revealing to the soul its own shame, and awakening it to its real danger, and stirring a new and Divine energy to overmaster its natural sloth and love of ease, lest it perish. This power from above can alone dissipate the fatal cloud, and establish within the reign of righteousness and peace.

But "the plague has begun,"¹ and everywhere prevails around us. It has been stayed back in us, its power weakened, its fatal doom atoned; its death, it may be, to the end restrained, and gradually be wholly removed from our being, and destroyed, and be as though it had never been. But this salvation can be ours, only if the sacred Presence, the Priest of the everlasting covenant Himself, stand within us, "between the living and the dead," between the old and the new natures, between the ever struggling efforts of the flesh still abiding in us, and the spirit of the new and glorious life which His love has breathed into us; and wholly restore us to His own Likeness, that we may be one with Himself everlastingly. To Him now, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, be all glory and praise for ever. Amen.

¹ Numbers xvi. 46.

LECTURE II.

THE RETURN OF LIGHT.

HEB. II. 14, 15.

“THAT THROUGH DEATH HE MIGHT DESTROY HIM THAT HAD THE POWER OF DEATH, THAT IS THE DEVIL; AND DELIVER THEM WHO THROUGH FEAR OF DEATH WERE ALL THEIR LIFETIME SUBJECT TO BONDAGE.”

It has been observed in the previous lecture that some of the profoundest mysteries touching our present state are not explained in Holy Scripture, but are left as mysteries. They lie far back beyond the creation of man, and revelation is concerned with the history of man. These pre-existent principles therefore are to be accepted in simplicity of trust, as we silently bow our intellect before God, and conform our thoughts to the conviction, that what perfect Wisdom has done or suffered to be, will hereafter be “justified of all her children.”

Another instance of this same kind is found in the text. It is not revealed, nor is it possible for us to understand, what yet the text clearly affirms, that death is undone by death, the death of the innocent overcoming the death of the guilty, and delivering from it. We have no knowledge of the reasons on which this principle rests. But the text is clear, that our LORD

destroyed “him that had the power of death, that is the Devil,” not by His power simply, nor simply by the merit of His Passion, but by means of death. The sacrifice of the innocent life was the means of redemption. Our LORD’s sacrifice of Himself did not obtain it, till that sacrifice was completed in death. Scripture is express on this point. S. Paul says again; “For this cause He is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.”¹ And so again in Colossians; “He hath forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it,” i.e., the Cross of death.² So fixed and absolute is this principle, that even our LORD Himself was not exempt from it. It was by virtue of His sacrificial death that He obtained His own heavenly inheritance. “By *His own Blood*,” saith S. Paul, i.e., by virtue of His own death, “He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”³ And this is what our LORD intended, when He said; “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they all may be sanctified through the truth.”⁴ Some interpret, sanctify, ‘offer Himself in death as a sacrifice;’ others, ‘consecrate and perfect Himself.’ Both interpretations are true. They are but different sides of one truth. They coalesce in one.

¹ Heb. ix. 15, 16.

² Col. ii. 13—15.

³ Heb. ix. 12.

⁴ S. John xvii. 19.

He perfected Himself by means of dying ; His sacrificial death was the ground of His accepted consecration of Himself. It was through the vail of His own torn flesh that He passed into His eternal life. He broke through into the abyss of Godhead by rending the mortal shroud that enveloped His earthly life.

This same mysterious law pervades all Scripture. Abraham was the commencement of the covenanted life given to Israel, as CHRIST was the commencement of our new Divine Nature. Now the crowning act of Abraham's faith, that which sealed his acceptance as the head of the chosen people, was the offering up his son Isaac to death. That event is often regarded as being merely a trial of Abraham's faith, to see whether he could give up the dearest object of his natural love, as well as his greatest spiritual treasure. It was this trial unquestionably. It was the testing of the Saint to see whether as he had given up his father, his land, his settled home, he could also give up the child of promise. As he laid his son on the altar, he had thoroughly weaned his soul from earth. The struggle was over ; for he had entirely surrendered him in intent, though his actual death was spared.

But there is another aspect under which this event is to be viewed, and one that affected not Abraham only, but all his race. Abraham was, as the head of his family, a sacrificing priest, and he was to offer the costliest sacrifice, that out of it the elect seed should spring. The seed of Israel was to arise out of one who had been given up to death. Abraham was permitted indeed to offer the ram caught in the thicket, instead of his own son, because Isaac was not *the* human life which could redeem the world. But as the mem-

bers of CHRIST'S Body are formed out of His Death, so the race of Israel arose out of the offering up in proffered death of their progenitor. It was on this offering being made by Abraham, that the promise was sealed with the final assurance. "Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."¹

The redemption of the first-born which prevailed in Israel as a universal and essential law, was a continuation of the same mystery. Every first-born, being a male, must be redeemed, and the first-born male was the representative of the entire family. In him all the members were redeemed. They must be redeemed by sacrifice, or they would be cut off. It was through the proffered death of its representative that every family in Israel preserved its life within the Covenant.

The grandest and most complete deliverance of the people of Israel, as a nation, was from the bondage in Egypt. The people had fallen back from the faith of their fathers. They had been corrupted by the Egyptians; they had begun to join in their idolatries, and they had lost the Divine Presence. When they were delivered, it was through sacrifice. Blood was to be sprinkled as the only security against the destroyer. And as they passed out of their doors that awful night between the blood-stained doorposts of their houses, the Divine Presence, so long withdrawn, returned. The glory enfolded in the pillar of the cloud went before them, and It afterwards forsook them not. They

¹ Gen. xxii. 16—18.

rose to life again through that death of the Paschal Sacrifice.

The same law was observed whenever an Israelite sinned against the Covenant. Only through death could the sinner be spared. A substitute was permitted to take the place of his own life; but death alone could expiate, and himself must lead his victim to the door of the sanctuary. He must himself lay his hand on its head, confess his sins over it, and thus identifying himself with it, he must slay it, and its blood be sprinkled on him. He must thus stand before God identified with the dead victim accepted in sacrifice in his stead. The penitent was re-admitted to the sanctuary through the accepted sacrifice. Through death accepted in the sanctuary of God, with which he had been made one, he could resume the share which he had forfeited in the life of the Covenant.

Consider the unceasing sacrifice of life offered within the temple in Jerusalem. Year after year through successive centuries the countless hecatombs were being offered up. This costly shedding of life never ceased, the altar perpetually steaming with the smoke which arose from the embers of the slaughtered victims. For what purpose this vast expenditure of blood? It will be said, "they were types of the great Offering of the latter days, to which all revelation looked, which was to take away the sins of the world." True; but this only changes the subject of the mystery. Why *that* Death? Moreover, in these sacrifices of the typical victims, there was manifestly a virtue of their own, a limited efficacy in cleansing away certain sins within that lower, that preparatory covenant; for S. Paul says; "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth

to the purifying of the flesh ; how much more shall the Blood of CHRIST, Who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”¹ They were themselves a medium of remission for certain transgressions, as well as the foreshadowing of the one true Lamb of God. They were also serving to establish in the heart of mankind the great principle, that through death, through innocent life, life without blemish and without spot, offered in sacrifice, the dead should live, the veil of the covering cast over all people be destroyed. The unceasing deaths of these countless victims were the ever-renewed assertions of this momentous principle.

Pity must have been stirred in the heart of the devout Israelite, at the thought of offering up the innocent life as the consequence of his own transgression. Every tender sense must have been wounded as he struck the blow, which saved himself at the cost of another's life, but it was his only hope—“ Without the shedding of blood is no remission.”² There was no breaking through the cloud that hid from him the holy light of God except by sacrifice. We are accustomed to point to the Death of CHRIST, as the most wonderful exhibition of Divine love, and we awake to tears the reviving tenderness of the penitent at the sight of the Divine sorrow. We discern in the last sufferings of the Passion a moving picture of what we ourselves had deserved, and accept the truth that the SON of God is dying a penal death in our own stead. We look to His offering of Himself also, as the grandest display of heroic fortitude, and supernatural patience, raising the very idea of Humanity, by its noble expression of highest

¹ Heb. ix. 13.

² Heb. ix. 22.

self-sacrifice. All these modes of viewing the Cross of JESUS are true ; but are they the whole truth ? These are but subjective modes of viewing it. They act only on our own mind and heart. They have only reference to ourselves. These views fall short of the main virtue of the Sacrifice. They leave out one whole momentous side of the great mystery. They omit, indeed, the greatest mystery of all, the whole objective part, the stupendous truth, that the Death of the God-Man acted on the unseen world ; that it affected the Eternal Godhead ; that it removed, destroyed the power of death that lay on the whole world, and overcame “ him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; ” that through that death life broke through, and dispersed the shroud that would have otherwise for ever enveloped the guilty dead.

Consider how this truth is preserved in the institution which perpetuates the Sacrifice of the Cross. Mark the exceeding care with which, in the forms of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, JESUS represents Himself as still in death, while through It He opens for us the way of eternal life. The Flesh and Blood were separately ordained, and are separately given. Think not for a moment that there is no meaning, no principle involved in the careful separation of the two species. JESUS is indeed living in the Blessed Sacrament. He is present, the entire Living CHRIST. His Divinity and His Humanity are in a profound mystery made one with each of the separated species. His Presence in the Sacrament is a state of life, a state far beyond the realm of death, is supernaturally and intensely living with the whole inherent Essence of Godhead indissolubly united for ever with His glorified Humanity. But nevertheless, the truth of His death

is preserved in the order of the Institution. The Sacrament was instituted in remembrance of His Death and Passion, and the separated Flesh and Blood in the two distinct species are the means through which we partake of His present Life. It is through death we pass into the hidden life. It is still the Death of the Crucified we present and plead, as we offer sacrifice to God for the removal of the vail that covers our faces, and hides God from us. It is still through eating and drinking of this Death, that we enter into the abyss of the Living Godhead. We taste His Death in the separation of His Flesh and Blood, while in Each we are feeding upon eternal Life.

The same principle of passing from death unto life, pervades all the inner nature of Christianity, and distinguishes it from all former dispensations. Circumcision was the mark of the old Covenant, and was merely the putting away of the filth of the flesh. It aimed at a partial cleansing of the old nature. It was an amelioration of the state of the flesh. It would be untrue to deny all efficacy to the ordinances of the old law. They left, it is true, the old nature; they left man still in the flesh. They could give no new, no Divine Nature; they did not raise man into a different order of being from that in which he was born. They did not impart a supernatural life rising above the present, living for other worlds, soaring ever upwards, and never resting, never satisfied, till man transformed become one with God. They recognized the flesh as still abiding, and only sought to cleanse away some measure of its sinfulness. Still to "sit under the vine, and under the fig tree," was the highest promise. To "dwell in the land" safely, was the end of the dispensa-

tion. To keep the flesh under the restraint of the moral law, was the highest requirement. To do what that law ordained, the utmost developement of humanity contemplated. But Baptism, which marks the new Covenant, is the very death and burial of the flesh. "Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead."¹ Again, we "were baptized into His death;"² it is "if we *are planted* together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection."³ There is, therefore, not merely a cleansing of the flesh contemplated and accomplished in Baptism, but a rising above it, through the grace of the new Covenant. The flesh is counted as a thing already condemned to die, stricken with death, already dying. It is smitten, and is being superseded by the power of the new life which has entered into it. It is done away already, as no longer a law and end of life. It is to be borne with, till it altogether pass away; but it is renounced, and the seal of death is stamped on it. What yet lives of the flesh, lives only to be subdued to the Spirit, to be chastened, to be crucified. This explains S. Peter's description of the power of Baptism, as contrasted with that of circumcision. "Not," he says, "the putting away of the filth of the flesh," which was the utmost result of circumcision; "but the answer," the response, the cry, "of a good," a renewed, a purified "conscience toward God;"⁴ the intensely energetic rising and witness before God of the new born spirit, instinct and speaking with Divine virtue, through the dying out of the powers and substance of the old

¹ Col. ii. 12.² Rom. vi. 3.³ Rom. vi. 5.⁴ 1 S. Pet. iii. 21.

nature. It is the resurrection life, already begun in us; the first resurrection from the dead. The new born spirit, responding to God, Who called it into being; that which is of God owning and rejoicing in the claims of God—is all that Baptism recognizes. The flesh hangs about us still yet awhile; but its law is no longer indulgence, but mortification. The order is express, “make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”¹ And it is only as the flesh is chastened, and the Spirit more and more emancipated, that the truly developed humanity springs into life. Each subdual of the lingering cravings of the condemned nature, is the triumph of the Divine Nature. We eat, but we eat, as it were, in haste; it is the Lord’s Passover. The flesh needs for a time its appointed sustenance; but it feeds, as it were, standing, “with loins girded, and shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand;”² for it hastens on the predestined march, fleeing from Egypt, lest it miss the passage to the holy land. We watch the flesh as an enemy. We hail the gradual extinction of its passions. We live a new and truer life only as its struggling links are loosened. We rise into the fulfilment of our better aspirations, only as “we bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal bodies.”³

Many look with terror to the approaching crisis of actual death. Why should it be so regarded? It will be but the accomplishment of what long ago was wrought in us in mystery. It will be but the closing struggle of the spirit, our true life, against the flesh, the cause of our suffering and our sin. It will be only the putting off for ever of the last hold which Satan has over us, through the lusts of the flesh. It will be the

¹ Rom. xiii. 14.² Exod. xii. 11.³ 2 Cor. iv. 10.

merciful separating off of what has been so long renounced ; the laying in a peaceful slumber to be refashioned, what has been so long a snare, a burden, an occasion of enmity to God, a hindrance to "all that is pure and lovely." The flesh cannot be reformed, till it is dissolved. It is condemned as irreclaimable in itself. It may be subdued, regulated, and chastened ; it cannot be fashioned after the image of CHRIST, till it is put off, and swallowed up of life. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die,"¹ and death is but the last and crowning act of the long and many self-sacrifices, in each of which the new born spirit has exulted.

Should we not then welcome death even with all its sorrows, as that of which all our true Christian life has been a delighted anticipation ? It is through death, and death only, that our spiritual nature can breathe freely, and go forth like the "bird out of the snare of the fowler," to live in perfect freedom its own true life.

Let us consider briefly some of the practical conclusions of the principles on which we have dwelt.

1. We here learn the pressing need of the Sacrifice we continually offer on our altars. As we offer It, we are actually taking our covenanted part in destroying "death, and him that hath the power of death." With each renewed sacrifice we are removing the vail, the covering which is laid on the face of all people. The Eucharistic Sacrifice is the pleading, the applying the Death of CHRIST for the remission of sin, and all the benefits of His Passion, for the whole body of the redeemed, both for the quick and the dead. It is the ordained memorial of the great Sacrifice of the Cross,

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 36.

left for us to continue, and as we offer It, we bring before God the whole power of that Sacrifice, which It represents and commemorates, before the Eyes of the FATHER. The whole vital power of the Atonement was contained and embodied for ever in the one perfect "Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world," once offered ; but the accomplishment of what was thus purchased, was to be set in motion, as it were, and applied only in time, in successive and continual memorial, and ever renewed pleadings. The death-vail was potentially, not absolutely, destroyed by the Sacrifice of the Cross. It still covers us. The power which the Sacrifice of the Cross possesses to destroy it, needs to be drawn forth and brought into act through the continual presentation of the sacrificed Humanity, "the Lamb as it had been slain,"¹ before the Throne by CHRIST Himself, and concurrently with this heavenly Oblation by the mystical offering of the same Victim by the Priests standing at the earthly altar. The sacrifices of Israel consisted of three parts. There was the living victim, and on it was placed the bread or fine flour, and the wine. These all were offered together, and the sweet savour from the combined elements went up for a memorial before the LORD. The same principle of sacrifice is continued now, as in all ages since the first covenant was ordained. There is manifestly before us on our altars the Bread or fine flour, and there is the Wine. Is there not also for us as for the Israelites, the living Victim ? Yes, surely ! He is there, though unseen. He is with the accompanying symbols, and they are with Him, that through them He may be one with us. Of Communion, which is the crowning act of our mystical offering, I shall need to speak hereafter. But if thou wouldst bring out the

¹ Rev. v. 6.

virtue of the hidden life of the Divine Victim for thyself, or cause its virtue to bear upon others' lives, urge before God unceasingly and with unquestioning faith the appointed memorial Sacrifice. If thou wouldest stretch out thy hands, thy heart, to reach other worlds, and bring to bear on them, and them that dwell therein, the full benefits of the Passion, offer, plead earnestly before the FATHER the One accepted Oblation of His Beloved SON. If thou wouldest stay back and remove the vail that seeks to return and overspread all people, thy own life, all true life; if thou wouldest weaken more and more, and finally overcome and cast out for ever, him that seeks to spread the dreadful power of darkness over God's fair creation, over all who are God's, cease not to present, to unite thyself with the all-availing Sacrifice, which fills the heaven and the earth with its sweet savour, reconciling God and man, "yea, all things unto Himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."¹

2. We here learn how to regard the trials, whether of body or of spirit, which gradually wear our life away. They are God's own chosen means of fulfilling what we have already professed to be our true vocation. They are the necessary accomplishment of that sentence on the flesh, which ever since we knew CHRIST, has been the object of our fondest desire, that dying with Him, we may rise with Him; that through the daily Cross, the daily resurrection may be ours; that "the sentence of death" being in us, the power of the Divine life may triumph in us. Shall we murmur at these strokes, which are verily the unloosening of the bonds to set the captive spirit free? Shall we regret the gradual decay, which is but the passing off of the gloom of the night before the dawn of the everlasting

¹ Col. i. 20.

Day? Would we check the progress of our dissolution, if we could? All that bows the vigour of our fleshly frame, all that consumes away the spirits and strength of the sensitive soul, are in truth but the travail pangs of the perfected deliverance of the Divine Nature struggling within us, as in a womb, for its heavenly development. Be not then unwilling to yield up the flesh to this slowly advancing death, which must increase, until its end be accomplished, "until the day break, and the shadows flee away."

3. Once more. Amid all the charms which deck this present world, all its exquisite beauty, all its intense interest, all its wonderful contrivances, all the love shed abroad over it, let us never forget that the curse of death is on all we see or feel, and only as that curse is accomplished, can this heaven and earth be transformed into "the new heaven, and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Ours is an age which boasts that Christianity is doing what it never did before. It is giving refinement to society, peace to the nations, liberty to the slave, i.e., it is making for man a better home, a safer resting place on this side the grave.¹ But all the while the world is the world still. We may indeed rejoice, and bless God for the secondary results of His redeeming love manifested in every improvement of society; nevertheless, to leave the world inwardly, if not outwardly, and to witness against it, is still the same necessity as ever. It is still our main work to prepare man for his grave, and lay him down to rest with a joyful hope of a blessed resurrection, far more than to smooth the pillow around his head, while in his sickness he still lingers here.

¹ These thoughts were suggested by a passage in "Jukes on the Offerings."

What rest had CHRIST on earth? He could not take for His home a world not yet purged by fire, a creation still under the curse. He passed through the world as a rejected pilgrim. All His earthly life speaks of sacrifice, because nothing here was to Him the real life. We cannot with all our toil, remove from this earth the doom, "thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to thee." We cannot with all our refinements, nor even with our religion, so change society, but that the true followers of CHRIST shall still be, though in it, yet not of it. It will still be the death-shroud, out of which the emancipated CHRIST in every man will rejoice to pass, rising to His native heavens. It may reach its highest climax of virtue, of happiness, of peace; but after its greatest developments, it must still be purged in the sacrifice and sacrament of death, before it can become "the Kingdom of our LORD, and of His CHRIST." This yet lingering gloom that broods over our earthly state must be wholly dissipated, before the Light of the beatific Vision can shine in upon the ransomed world. We "cannot see God and live," until in His own "Light we shall see Light."

Hasten the time, O LORD, and cut short Thy work in righteousness. "Even so, come, LORD JESUS." But yet "patience must have its perfect work, that we may be perfect, and entire, wanting nothing." Help us then in patience to "possess" our "souls." Help us even to "make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," while the fatal doom, running out its destined course, is being purged away; that the death-strokes of our trial hour may be transformed into a gracious discipline, and out of the refiner's fire we may come forth "to offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness." Amen.

LECTURE III.

THE RANSOMED LIFE.

ROM. XII. 1.

"I BESEECH YOU, THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, THAT YE PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE UNTO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE."

It was shown in the preceding Lecture, that by a law the reasons of which are not explained to us,—revelation not reaching back to principles which were in operation before the creation of man—the death of the innocent victim does away the death of the guilty; and that, according to this law, CHRIST by His Death removes the veil of death from man, destroying, not death only, but "him also that hath the power of death, that is, the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."¹

It was shown, moreover, that, according to the laws of the Covenant of Israel, the guilty person, being identified with the victim, was accepted as the victim was accepted, that, sharing its death in a mystery, he thereby shared also its acceptance, the victim's death being viewed as his own, the curse of his own death

¹ Heb. ii. 14, 15.

thus passing away, and himself mystically raised to life again in the recovered light of God. This ground of acceptance, established in the mind of the Israelites, is the assurance and type of our acceptance through the Sacrifice of the Death of CHRIST. Sprinkled with His Blood, we stand before God clothed with all His merits, identified with Himself, and endued with all His acceptableness. The covering of death is through CHRIST thus broken through, and we pass within the realms of life with all its recovered powers, now become our own.

This is our redemption, our bringing back from the land of the enemy. To the world at large, to men living in sin, or in lax undisciplined habits, this is the whole aspect of Christianity which they comprehend. They see the one fact of remission of sins through the Blood of CHRIST, and to this idea of forgiveness they limit their view of Christianity; they cannot see beyond it. Often the dying man with his last breath expresses this idea as the ultimate end to which human hope can aspire, or the last prayers of failing nature supplicate.

But the redemption of Israel was not the whole of the history of Israel; it was but the beginning of their true life. The Red Sea passed, and Egypt left behind them, their life had but begun. The journeyings in the wilderness, the settlement in the holy land, lay before them. In like manner, not in redemption alone consists the whole view of Christianity. What we have already considered is but its Exodus. We have seen how the shroud of death is removed from the face of man; how man arises from his bier. But the whole of life has then to be lived. He was thus raised up only in order that he might with his revived powers present

his body a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is his reasonable service." The one idea is an advance beyond the other. The first is the raising out of death, and then follows the offering up of the risen life. Can we limit our view to the one, and ignore the other, which is, in fact, the very end and purpose for which we are raised from the dead?

It is to be most carefully noted that the appointment of the sacrifices which were to be continually offered by the children of Israel, followed the Exodus.¹ They were ordained after the deliverance from bondage, the flight from death, the standing on the further shore, and the joyful song when Miriam took her timbrel, and, at the head of her choir, praised the LORD Who had "triumphed gloriously," the conquered foe being drowned in the depths of the sea. The laws of sacrifice revealed to the Israelites in the Book of Leviticus, were revealed subsequently to this deliverance. Whatever, therefore, those elaborate sacrifices, recorded in the Book of Leviticus, teach, they teach to those who are already redeemed: they assume the redemption as a past and accomplished fact, and on the very ground of redemption enforce the further truth. The sacrifices of the Covenant were not the preliminary of its institution, but the expressions of its enduring life. They were visible forms of an inner life to be preserved by their means in communion with God, as the result of their new relation to Him. Their importance may be certainly inferred, among the Patriarchs, by the fact that whenever they settled in a fresh spot, they built an Altar to the LORD; among their children, the Israelites, because in all their wanderings they were required to

¹ The appointment of the Altar is given, *Exod. xxvii.*; that of the Sacrifices, *Levit. i.—vii.*

carry their Altar with them, and when arrived within the precincts of the promised land, guard it with strictest jealousy. Moreover the minute details of their sacrifices, and the careful enforcement of them,—the consequence of failing to offer being, that such a soul was “cut off from the people,”—all tended to prove their momentous importance.

It is true, that the Prophets spoke continually of the worthlessness of sacrifice; “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”¹ “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me,”² &c. Such indignant remonstrances, however, abounding in the writings of the Prophets, only implied that the inner spirit which should have accompanied the act of sacrifice, was absent. They were vain only because of this defect. Could sacrifices, when rightly offered, be vain, when they were described as being a “sweet savour to the LORD?” Of Noah’s sacrifice, e.g., after his going forth from the Ark, it is said; “And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake.”³ So important in their bearings on actual life were the ordinances regarding sacrifice, that even the animals chosen for the use of the Altar were significant. They had relation to the disposition of the offerer. The animals preferred were the bullock, the lamb, and the turtle dove. Can we suppose for a moment that there was no vital truth involved in this choice of the creatures, when our LORD took for Himself, and still retains even in Heaven, a name derived from the animal of sacrifice which specially represented Him? He is for ever “the LAMB of GOD.” The animals were intended to show the spirit in which

¹ 1 Sam. xv. 22.² Isa. i. 13.³ Gen. viii. 21.

sacrifice should be offered. The bullock represented active patient service ; the lamb, silent uncomplaining submission : the turtle dove, gentleness and innocence.

It is commonly supposed that the sacrifices of the Levitical Law related only to the remission of sin. It was not so. Of the six different kinds of sacrifice ordained for common use among the Israelites, two only had reference to sin,—the sin-offering and the trespass-offering,—the latter atoning for actual transgression committed, the former for the general sinfulness of nature.

In the other sacrifices sin was not mentioned. Indeed they could not be offered by one who was in a state of sin. They were the offerings of the redeemed, the purified, the faithful Israelite, offering without constraint, of his voluntary will, meeting God in holiness and peaceful communion, only desiring a further grace, and seeking to glorify Him with acceptable service. They were distinguished from all other sacrifices as the sacrifices of a "sweet savour." The distinction was strongly marked. Sin-offerings could not be burnt within the sanctuary ; they must be carried without the camp. Our LORD, on this account, being a sin-offering, was crucified without the city. Such sacrifices were cast out as hateful both in the sight of God and man, because sin was in them. But the other sacrifices—those of "sweet savour"—were burnt on the Altar within the Holy place, and went up to Heaven within the circle of God's immediate Presence, and were borne into the very Holiest place through the veil, reaching the very Mercy Seat whereon God abode. In the sacrifices for sin, man being under a curse satisfied the offended Justice of God. But in the other sacrifices, the sacrifices of "sweet savour," man, already

redeemed from the curse, satisfied a holy and loving requirement of God, Who desired the service of His ransomed creature.

Further, it is to be noted that these sacrifices "of sweet savour" stand *first* in the Book of Leviticus. The book opens with them, and only after them do we read of the sin, and trespass offerings. The reason of the order is clear. The sacrifices of "sweet savour" were the proper offerings, those which were to be expected from the redeemed. Sin, or trespass, is a strange thing in the redeemed. Sacrifices for their atonement were added to meet the requirement, should it arise : but for the delivered soul to sin again ; for those who had been brought out from a hard bondage " by miracles and signs, by a mighty Hand and by a stretched out Arm ;" by the Divine Presence " in the pillar of cloud by day" and " the pillar of fire by night,"—for such to sin again, was not to be the ordinary, the expected state. The sacrifices of "sweet savour," the free-will offerings of the ransomed soul giving itself and its all more and more to its Redeemer,—this was the true, the expected result. The cleansing away of fresh sin, of renewed transgression, was indeed provided for ; but was kept in the background, as what neither God nor man was first to contemplate.

Of these sacrifices of "sweet savour" the first and the most common was the burnt-offering. When offered, it was first slain, thus marking the necessity of death. Afterwards it was cut into its several pieces and laid in order upon the Altar, marking the offering up of every several part of the devoted life. It was then kindled by the sacred fire which had descended from heaven, and which never was suffered to go out. There in its several parts, whole, yet divided, it lay burning. Every

portion sent up its sacred steam of "sweet savour," circling and spreading throughout the Sanctuary. Every portion was wholly consumed. No part whatever was taken, or left to be eaten. All was given up to God. The entire oblation arose before His Presence, wafted within the inner circles of His secret veiled Abode. It passed away into Him, and was lost to all outward consciousness. But it lived before Him to be the token, the embodiment of a wholly offered life, voluntarily given up and consumed in the delight of pleasing God, of being lost in God.

The stated morning and evening sacrifices of Israel, which, for fifteen centuries were offered daily at nine o'clock and three o'clock unceasingly,—these were burnt-offerings. They were the offerings of the collective people of Israel. They were offered in their name, and in their stead. Wherever an Israelite wandered, he had still his part in that daily burnt-offering. He was thus continually represented within the Sanctuary of God. He was ever laid there before God's immediate Dwelling-place, ever consumed in the desire of being wholly God's, of ever losing himself and his works in the unsparing offering of a sacrificed life. Every faithful Israelite could thus associate himself, and be thus unceasingly identified with, the ever-accepted daily sacrifice. Unceasing the sacrifice was ; for on the embers yet smoking of the morning burnt-offering were laid in order the pieces of the evening sacrifice, and on the yet smouldering ashes of the evening oblation those of the morning. All night through rose up the steam of "sweet savour," day and night telling each other of the ever renewed act of a perpetual offering to God. And in this visible form each Israelite, far or near, was offering himself, through his representatives, before his God.

It was a remarkable arrangement, peculiar to the burnt-offering, no other sacrifice admitting of the provision, that it could be offered by a stranger, one not of the seed of Abraham, nor adopted into the privileges of his race. A stranger could take this part, though debarred all other, in the established ordinances of the Covenant. There was great significance in this provision; for it involved a momentous truth. All the other sacrifices, the sin-offerings and the peace-offerings, were strictly covenant sacrifices. They were grounded on special promises, peculiar and confined to the covenanted children of Israel. They could therefore be offered only by those who were within the Covenant. The burnt-offering, on the contrary, represented a universal truth, one common to all humanity. All humanity, all created life, has its proper end in offering itself up to God. The creature's life is true only as it is consumed in this unceasing self-dedication. While the Sanctuary of Israel was shut jealously against all nations as to its peculiar privileges, it yet proclaimed abroad to all people this irreversible truth of the original and universal call to all men everywhere alike, that life was given to the creature to be offered in this reasonable service to its Creator.

Moreover, there was for the Israelites the remarkable ordinance of a double sacrifice, bringing out yet more distinctly the difference between the sin, and the pure, offering. It was appointed to be used in redeeming the firstborn,¹ and in cleansing the leper.² When our LORD was presented in the Temple, they bore a *pair* of turtle doves, as His offering, according to the universal law observed in the redemption of every male⁴ child of Israel. Of these two victims one was offered as a sin-offering, the other, after being dipped in the blood of

the sin-offering, was offered as a burnt-offering.⁵⁻ First the sin-offering was made, and then the burnt-offering sprinkled with its blood. The two combined together expressed the two sides of human life in its relation to God, and met the two most vital necessities of every child of man in his present fallen state. Man needs an atonement that his sin may be put away, and himself reconciled to God. This necessity was met by the sin-offering. He needs, also, to present himself as a willing sacrifice to God after his sin-offering has been accepted; this was the object and expression of the burnt-offering. Under this same twofold aspect our LORD's sacrifice of His own Life manifested itself, and consequently the double offering at His Presentation in the Temple had its application to Himself. His course of suffering, His Passion and Death, as an Atonement, was exhibited in the one turtle dove, offered as a sin-offering. His everlasting glory arising out of His most precious Death, to live for ever before the FATHER as a perpetual Oblation, —this was exhibited in the other turtle dove, first steeped, as He was, in blood, and then to be consumed as "a sweet savour" unto God.

Consider, now, how these great eternal truths are exhibited in our continual Sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist. Their several lines converge and meet at our Altar Service, embodying all the offerings and services which we have contemplated in the typical ritual of Israel. First, there is the sin-offering, the Memorial of the Death of CHRIST presented before the FATHER, in the separated, sundered Elements of His Body and His Blood. We bear and plead this dying of our LORD JESUS before God as our own, and in uniting ourselves with this solemn act of Sacrifice for the world's re-

demption, and our own, we are accepted. Then follows the reception,¹ the feeding, the union with His life in Its assimilation with our own, the interpenetrating, the abiding of the Holy Flesh and the Holy Blood within our very bodies and our very souls. Having been identified with the accepted Sacrifice for sin, we are by actual reception made One with His life. Then follows the third stage of the Mystery. Already filled and instinct with the Sacred Humanity of JESUS, Which Itself is filled and instinct with His GODHEAD, "we" then, in the language of our Post-Communion prayer, "offer and present ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto God." This is the burnt-offering. The surrender of one's own self becomes capable of being accepted, because steeped in the Blood of CHRIST Which is in us; and being alive with His Living Presence within us, we are thenceforward fitted to be kindled with the Divine fire of an all-consuming love, in holy services and increasing self-oblation, ever ascending until wholly lost in God, our true covenanted Life.

And there is this further blessedness attached to our Communion, the type of which we have seen in the daily sacrifices of Israel, that even when absent from our Altars, wandering far away, or laid in sickness, or our lot cast in the more barren regions of the spiritual world, we are still being presented before God, wherever the Holy Sacrifice is being offered, we are still offering ourselves up in the Oblations of our brethren, we are still in that one selfsame act united, as with them, so with the One Lamb of

¹ The view of that portion of the Levitical covenant which regards the feeding on the Sacrifice, will come under consideration in the following Lecture.

GOD ; we are dying in Him, we are living in Him, we are accepted in Him ; and when we die, whether living or departed, if within the mystical Body of CHRIST, we are all together, one with another, still ever represented, still ever being offered, still ever being accepted with every renewed pledge of love, still presenting ourselves, our souls and bodies, wherever and whenever that Holy Sacrifice is offered, because we are still in Him Who is offered, and He in us, together with all who are in Him, in One Communion. It is but one Altar, but One Holy Flesh, but One Spirit, as there is but "One LORD, One GOD, and FATHER of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all."¹

A few practical reflections only may be added to close our subject.

To speak the language of type. When Israel was in Egypt, they knew nothing beyond the paschal sacrifice, the flight, the deliverance from death. Israel had afterwards to learn, when the deep Red Sea lay between them and Egypt, the laws of the perpetual burnt-offering, and of the ever onward march under the guidance of the pillar of the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, while they were offering their unceasing sacrifices of sweet savour, more and more completely dedicating themselves unto God.

To speak the language of simple Christian truth. The Christian, while standing at the lowest point of his development, of the first illuminations of the Spirit, knows only of the hurried flight from sin, and the ransoming from death, and the one aspect of CHRIST's sacrifice as It redeems the lost. But the believer, as he develops his first idea, as he stands successively on higher and ever

¹ Ephes. iv. 6.

rising ground, with advancing illuminations of the Spirit, the immediate fear of death past,—learns the laws of self-sacrifice, the unceasing offering of his life to God, and the perpetual guiding of the Holy Light, in which he ever seeks to make his offering of himself more and more perfect. In the onward moving of God he is led further and further away from his former state, the self which he had fed and indulged, being laid in all its several parts in order upon the Altar, self dying, CHRIST living, self becoming less and less to oneself, CHRIST becoming more and more one's life, life becoming less and less one's own, more and more His Who bought it at a great price. And as the Israelite who loved much, would seek out the most costly sacrifice, so, as love's desires grow—and love ever grows through the unceasing sacrifice of self,—the soul seeks more and more of costliest offerings to offer to its God. To the ransomed Christian, as to the Israelite, the timbrel, and the dance of triumph, and the song of joy on the Red Sea shore, were not the closing of the march of victory and miraculous power; they were but its commencement, its first opening scene, the beginning of its triumphs, the first step in the recovered freedom of the rescued soul.

2. It is a grievous error to suppose that such offerings of a gracious life in the redeemed, are not of worth in themselves. There is a theology which teaches that we honour CHRIST the more, the more we disparage human works. It represents works as valuable merely because they betoken faith; that as proofs of faith in CHRIST they are precious, not in themselves. This system regards faithful services, only as tokens of something else, not as pleasing before God on their own account. And yet Holy Scripture is simple and posi-

tive in its assertions. It tells us that to present our bodies a living sacrifice, is not only a holy offering, but is also "acceptable unto God." Acceptable,¹ the word involves the idea of what is "well pleasing," "causing gratification," "stirring delight." It answers to "the sweet savour," which caused a movement of approving love and gladness in the Heart of God. And surely it gives the greater honour to our Lord, that the human nature which He Himself wears, as His own, is in itself, through His grace, become capable of pleasing God, in all who are true to Him, and the more that CHRIST is in us and one with us, the more pleasing. We need not attribute a desert to our works, as though they could earn anything as due because of them, when we attribute to them a power of gratifying God, as the fulfilment of His own idea and the accomplishment of His own grace. They can exist only through His grace. They are in truth His own works in us: "God worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure." They are Himself in us, and therefore they are acceptable. Their merit is His own, not ours, while yet we please Him, as we correspond with His inspirations and grace, which work all our works in us.

One chief cause of languor, so often experienced in spiritual life, and of slackness in works of charity, is the want of the keen apprehension of this truth, even as, when apprehended, it stimulates and quickens self-sacrifice, and makes it a perpetual brightness, often upholding highest aims in loneliness with an

¹ "εὐάρεστος, acceptus, valde gratus, bene placens."—Schleus. The same term is used and explained, and the idea amplified, Phil. iv. 18, "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God."

amazing force, giving a special joy and spring to effort, and elevating the spirit to reach forth with increasing earnestness toward God, with a power such as no other motive can impart. "Shall I indeed give pleasure to my God by this effort?" "Will He accept me, and His Spirit rest in me, if I fail not in the fulfilment of this call?"—are thoughts which stir a generous heart, and supply continually fresh inducements to ever renewed acts of self-devotion.

3. Lastly, there is need to distinguish between a mere natural tendency to act kindly, or an activity even in religious services, and that inward self-consecration, that self-sacrifice at every cost which the law of the burnt-offering expressed. There is no necessary sacrifice of self in kind words, nor in energetic actions, nor in schemes of benevolence, nor in the busiest pursuit of works of charity. Self may stand out prominently from amidst charitable designs and efforts, even from a life spent in such aims, as on the Alpine heights dark jagged peaks of the natural debris of the mountain break through the silvery surface of untrodden snow which surrounds them. The charitable design, or the absorbing interest of benevolent energy, may even feed the self which they envelop. In nothing is it more needful to take heed that self is being really offered to God, than in religious life. This is the cause why God marked out in such particular details the kinds of sacrifice which He demanded, and so earnestly enforced the necessity of their being offered "without blemish and without spot." It was not enough to make offerings to God. The offerings were to be closely inspected before they were offered, lest some secret blemish unfitted them for His Altar. When the besetting sin is not spared; when the searching Hand

of God is suffered to touch it to the very quick, and it shrink not from the touch ; when the religious design is carried out with equal ardour, although some sensitive weakness has been wounded, and the chastening is accepted as the soul's truest profit ; when we are as anxious as ever for success, although no selfish wish is being pleased, and another win the praise of the work ; when fervent prayer, and calm communion with the unseen world, and growing humility, and an absorbing faith, and a love enduring and unchanging, and a growing consecration of thought, of the inner movements of the soul, and the secret pulses of the life, are tending to become the habitual tenour of the renewed nature,—then indeed a living sacrifice is being laid on the Altar, and all its parts consumed in the flame which, descending from Heaven, transforms into its own glory the poor earthly materials, which God thus mercifully assumes into Himself, in Whom alone they attain their predestined perfectness.

The old nature is under the curse, whether or no it express itself in the forms of religion. Self is not less self, although it gain its end in a holy cause. The world is not less hateful to God, because its principles have found their opportunity in furthering a work dedicated to Him. Nor will a pure intention mitigate the evil of an indulged vanity, any more than a righteous end can justify an unrighteous means. Mere energy is not identical with holy zeal, nor an interest in the things of God a substitute for inward discipline, or saintliness of life. Our work may live before God, and ourselves perish, or if saved, yet “so as by fire.” O saddest, blindest self-deceit, which thinks to offer to God a blemished sacrifice ! O folly, reckless and profane, to rush into the sanctuary of God, and be busied

with its secret treasures, while yet careless as to the inner life, unwatchful of the impulses and motives which play to and fro within the heart !

And yet to be engaged in sacred ministrings, or to labour in any true earthly calling for the glory of God, is the very means to discipline the inner life, to chasten and to deepen its purest aspirations. Such a course is not only the natural development of such aspirations, but also the nurse, the refining, the perfecting, of them. The inner life attains its truest, noblest forms under the trials, the difficulties, the rebukes of outward things. As the Human nature in CHRIST was made perfect through suffering, even so His elect must be subject to the constraining pressure and toil of the world, the sharpness of the cross, and the wear of continual outward exactions, while His grace inspires and forms within them the beauty of His own likeness. "Every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt."¹ Even while in serving God we run the risk of failing to fulfil the aspirations of the inward desire, we are, if earnest and sincere, learning our true weakness ; practising the senses which are being "exercised to discern between good and evil," and advancing, though we may know it not, in the truest and most enduring conformity to the Divine will. We are continually presenting to God what He will mercifully direct and mould for the manifestation of His own glory. If we persevere, He will "finish His work," for the promise is that "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of JESUS CHRIST."²

¹ S. Mark ix. 49.

² Phil. i. 6.

LECTURE IV.

THE DIVINE COMMUNION.

2 S. PETER I. 4.

“WHEREBY ARE GIVEN UNTO US EXCEEDING GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES: THAT BY THESE YE MIGHT BE PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE, HAVING ESCAPED THE CORRUPTION THAT IS IN THE WORLD THROUGH LUST.”

It was said in the last lecture, that the burnt-offering of the ritual of Israel expressed a truth common to all humanity, common indeed to all creatures,—that the life given is the property of Him Who gave it, and is therefore to be ever offered to Him in a perpetual service. It was also explained, that although the Fall had deprived God of His due, of this offering of human life to Him; yet that, to a certain extent at least, this blessed privilege was restored to the people of Israel, when they were redeemed; that Israel was redeemed on purpose that they might be raised up again to this capacity of self-sacrifice; that self-oblation properly followed redemption, and not redemption an end in itself; and that the witness to this great truth was embodied in the rite of the burnt-offering, which stands in the Book of Leviticus the first of the appointed sacrifices, because it was the proper result, the imme-

diate consequence that should have been manifested in the newly developed life of the ransomed people.

Other sacrifices however were ordained, to which attention must now be directed. There were special sacrifices peculiar to the Mosaic Covenant, not, as the burnt-offering, applicable alike to all mankind. These belonged only to the children of promise. These special, or superadded sacrifices were of two distinct kinds, having relation to the two great wants of our fallen nature, one directly arising from the Fall, the other a want inherent in us from our original creation.

If the burnt-offering could not be offered, did the Mosaic Covenant provide any remedy? If a disability from sin arose to shut out the child of promise from his usual access to God, was this a hopeless case? Was he shut out for ever? Could he never regain his state of grace, never more approach the Altar? Could he never more be offered in the daily oblation of the sanctuary, to be "a sweet savour" unto God?

The remedy ordained, was designed with a precision that marked the truest, deepest consideration for our frailty. We sin in two ways. We may sin by the transgression of a Divine law. This is strictly speaking a trespass. To meet this need, the trespass-offering was instituted. But we may sin also through ignorance, without evil intent. This liability arises from the mere sinfulness of nature, falling into evil, and yet not knowing that it is evil. It is the consequence of corruption, without the malice of disobedience. To meet this need, the sin-offering was ordained.¹

These two kinds of sacrifice, though used for differ-

¹ For these two kindred forms of sacrifice, and their details, see Lev. iv.—vii.

ent ends, were offered after the same manner. The penitent must bring his victim to the door of the sanctuary, and while placing his hand on its head, confess his sin, by this two-fold action transferring his sin from himself to his victim, while the victim accepts the death due to himself as the penalty of his sin. The victim is then slain. But the penitent is not yet absolved, nor is his power to offer himself to God acceptably, as yet restored to him. There still needs to be added the priestly act. There must be a mediator between God and the sinner. The Priest must take the victim's blood, and with it touch the horns of the altar. This act, sealing the penitent's reconciliation with God, restored to him the forfeited power of communion through sacrifice. His access to the Altar was now secured.

Sin involves two evil results, one affecting man in his own person, the other affecting man in his relation to God, in his service to God, his communion with Him. The removing of the one evil, is not the removing of the other evil. Both alike have separately to be removed. The sinner's own person must be cleansed. This is one act of grace. Then, as a further act, his acceptableness in service, in offering his cleansed person to God,—this too must be restored. This is the superadded blessedness. Therefore the sinner's restoration is a complex, a two-fold act of grace. There is first the transference of his sins to the accepted victim, and then the offering on the altar of the victim's blood, its sacrificed life.

It has been already stated, that the death-vail, the covering cast at the Fall over the face of man, as of one deceased, could be removed only by the death in sacrifice of an acceptable victim. We see in the pro-

visions we have been considering, that this covering of death may return ; that it ever tends to return, and spread itself again over the face of man, even within the Covenant, even over the face of the redeemed, and if returned, may abide on him for ever. The child of the Covenant may again be shut out from the sanctuary, again lose his power of service, again be hidden from the Face of God, and relapse into the lost state from which he had been rescued. It is necessary therefore by continued acts of sacrifice, to maintain our spiritual ground ; necessary to be always keeping back the ever recoiling vail of death ; or else, as another wave of the deep may yet arise and overwhelm the mariner just rescued from the wreck, but unable to keep his hold of the shore, so the redeemed, relaxing his hold on God, may sink back into the abyss, and be lost again for ever. As in his first rescue man needed sacrifice, so in preserving himself within the Covenant of grace, he needs it still. To use the language of type. The penitent must offer his victim, as representing his own deserved death, and the Priest must sprinkle its blood on the horns of the Altar. To speak the language of the Christian mysteries. The penitent must confess his sins, pleading the one unseen Victim, the Lamb of God. The Priest must then apply in absolution the sprinkling of the precious Blood to cleanse again his conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. Thus if the child of promise sin, he may be restored, and the power of offering sacrifices of "sweet savour" to his reconciled God may become again his own precious right. He was dead ; he may thus become alive again.

But this was not the whole of the grace of the Covenant. The burnt-offering was shown to be the blessed task of restored humanity simply in itself, the

right, as it is the law, of its true nature ever due to God. But was nothing added to this natural blessing through the Covenant? Was no higher nature than its own to be imparted to humanity? That there is a greater gift to be conveyed, the very meaning of the term, sacrifice, implies. Sacrifice means, if we take the full and ancient definition of the term, every work done in order that by a holy fellowship we may be united to God.¹ It was a universal belief throughout the early Gentile world, that participation in a sacrifice is a participation in the nature of the Being to Whom the sacrifice is offered; or to speak more accurately, there is, first, communion between the worshipper and the sacrifice which he offers, and then communion through the sacrifice with the Being to Whom it is offered. The great purpose of sacrifice is to lift the being of the worshipper through his union with his victim, up to union with the Deity. He and God meet, as it were, in the victim. The victim is the medium through which the worshipper reaches out unto, and touches, and becomes one with Him Whom he adores. This principle of sacrifice was the universal belief of the heathens of the ancient, as it is now of the modern, world. They believed that in and through their sacrifices they were united with their gods; and this was the chief cause why such expressions of horror pervade the Old Scriptures at the idea of the covenanted, the chosen people sacrificing to the idols of the pagan nations around them.

They were, as Scripture assures us, demons, or de-

¹ S. Augustine's definition of sacrifice,—“the master-dictum of antiquity on this subject, is ‘*sacrificium est omne opus quod agitur, ut sancta societate inhæreamus Deo.*’ Sacrifice is anything which is done to this end, that we may have a holy fellowship with God, and inherence in Him.”—Freeman, *Div. Service*, Vol. II. p. 25.

vils, whom the heathen ignorantly worshipped ; and to sacrifice to them, and to feed on their sacrifices, was to become united to them. They thereby entered into devils, and devils into them. The idol sacrifice was not a mere fictitious service, or a mere error in knowledge ; nor did its hatefulness consist merely in debasing man's highest service ; nor was it merely that such sacrifice was a disparagement to God in setting up in His stead an imaginary rival on His throne. The idols represented actual creatures. The creatures represented, were abominable in their natures, and to partake of the sacrifices offered to them, was to partake of the inherent abomination of their natures.

It was not merely that abominable revelries formed the attractive allurements of the service, maddening the idol worshippers to an impure and frantic joy, but that the living nature of real beings, wicked exceedingly and impure in substance, were communicated in these feasts through partaking of their sacrifices. What can be more clear, or more dreadful, than the picture which S. Paul draws, and which he urged on the Faithful of his own day, as a most impressive warning against participation in the idol feasts ? “ Behold Israel after the flesh ; are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar ? ”¹ Are not the Israelites, as they eat of the sacrifices, communicants in some real

¹ 1 Cor. x. 18. Dr. Wordsworth thus comments on the passage. “ Worship offered to any but the One True God, is accounted by God to be offered to *devils* who *do exist*, although it be offered by man to *idols* (of Jupiter, Venus, Bacchus,) which *do not exist*. ” “ He (S. Paul) speaks of a communion with devils ; meaning thereby a communion of *devilish influences* infused into those who are guilty of acts of idolatrous worship. See Tertullian, de Spect. 25, 26, speaking of a woman who became possessed by an evil spirit while present at a theatre. ”

mystery in the living power of Him at Whose altar they feed? "What say I then, that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols, is anything?" Not that the very form, or attribute of the imagined deity, is a truth; but devils really are represented by the imaginary idols, and are present, and receive the acts of adoration. "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." And then the Apostle contrasts the verity of the idol sacrifice with the verity of the august Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. "Ye cannot drink the Cup of the LORD and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the LORD's Table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the LORD to jealousy?" "Ye cannot,"—it would be an unnatural and inconceivable mixture of two wholly diverse and irreconcilable natures, to unite the indwelling presence of devils with the indwelling Presence of our LORD. Could He, Whose Name is Jealous, enter in, and abide where demons had been welcomed, the two together to be seated as on rival thrones?

We have already considered the triumphal Exodus of the ransomed people, the amazing fruit of the Paschal sacrifice, and their offering themselves in grateful service on the Red Sea shore, the land which the redeemed first trod with free bold step, while devoting themselves to Him Who had delivered them from their iron bondage. We have seen how the Divine Presence came forth and followed them, as a fruit of that Paschal Sacrifice. But was this the greatest nearness to which they attained? Was even the entrance into the tabernacle, where the Divine Presence

rested within the veil in Its most transcendent earthly glory, the height of their attainment ?

Mount Sinai is distinguished in the sacred records for God's descent upon its summit, for the gathering thereon of the Angel hosts, by whose dispensation the law was given ; by being the site on which the great preparatory Covenant was revealed and sealed, and heavenly things manifested to Moses, as the fashion after which he should make all that was to be enshrined in the sacred recesses of the tabernacle.

But were all these manifestations, however transcendent and glorious, the only, or the chiefest of the glories of that sacred mountain ? Surely there was one other manifestation, fraught with a yet profounder majesty, and touching the whole inner life of man. I allude to the mysterious feeding of Moses and the Elders of Israel before God on the Mount. After the law had been given to the people, and they had deliberately and solemnly assented to it,¹ and the sacrifices which sealed the Covenant had been offered, and the blood of the sacrifice sprinkled, half on the altar, half on the people, thus binding God and the people together in one common act, the Covenant thus being on both sides complete and irrevocable, there followed the most amazing incident of all. "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the Elders of Israel ; and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness."² It was the climax of their wondrous exaltation, admitting them to at least an approach of some faint measure, or reflection, of the Beatific Vision. It is added ; "Also they saw God, and did *eat and*

¹ Exod. xxiv. 3.

² Ver. 9, 10.

drink."¹ It was the utmost height in that march of mystery, to which Israel was then raised, an anticipation of the eating together of our LORD and His Apostles on the shore of the Sea of Galilee; the figure cast before of the marriage Supper of the Lamb; an approximation, though, as we shall presently see, falling far short of the blessedness into which we enter, as we eat at our Altars.

But was there anything like to this nearness to God perpetuated, as an abiding state in Israel, and open to every one of the Faithful in the succeeding ages? There was such a provision. Among the sacrifices of "sweet savour," which are distinct from the sin-offerings, was "the peace-offering." Like the burnt-offering, it had no connexion with sin. It could not be offered by any one in sin. But it was greater than the burnt-offering in this,—that it was not merely an offering, but also a partaking with God of what had been offered to Him. It was an offering of "sweet savour," with the added result of communion. In the burnt-offering all was consumed on the altar, all being God's. Of the peace-offering God had His share, part being burnt on the altar. The Priest also had his share, as mediator between God and him who offered, and the offerer himself had a share. The offerer fed on the same food with God and God's Priest, the medium of communication between God and him. This provision was the special characteristic feature of the peace-offering. All fed together upon the same victim. God was satisfied equally with man, and with the mediator between God and man, in the mutual participation of one common food.

That the act of eating should be thus the medium

¹ Exod. xxiv. 11.

of the greatest nearness to God, will not appear strange, if we consider the law which makes our nature dependent continually on receiving fresh increase of its substance by food received from without.

This same law runs throughout created life. Angels live by Angels' food. Our LORD Himself ate after His resurrection, marking at least the adaptation of the risen Body to the use of food. The "Tree of Life," stands "in the midst" of the Holy City, bearing "twelve manner of fruits," and "the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations,"¹ thus symbolising the increase of life eternal within the Blessed through outward reception. God alone is self-existent. All other life is sustained and grows by assimilating to itself some external substance. So universal is this law, that the same idea is in a figure applied to God. Sacrifice offered to God is called in Scripture "the Food" of God. This expression is more especially applied to the peace-offering, i.e., to that portion of it which was burnt on the Altar as God's part of the sacrifice. It was called "the food of the offering made by fire unto the LORD."² The term expresses under the most vivid image the satisfaction of God at His people's offerings. He who offers, and all that he offers of faithful service, became in a profound mystery the food and delight of God. It entered into His Being, and He fed upon it. But to eat with God of the same food from the same Altar, was the most perfect assurance of reconciliation and peace to him who offered.

Great, however, as was this distinguishing privilege within the Covenant of Israel, it was but a faint type, and far distant approximation to what we have entered

¹ Rev. xxii. 2.

² Lev. iii. 11.

into. The Israelite fed indeed of the victim of which God also mysteriously partook, and thus became one in actual substance with the accepted victim, and so had a community of rest in the same object. But, whatever the grace that might be bestowed, the Israelite did not through his victim become one with God. There was no union of a common life between God and the victim. This was indeed typified, but it was not yet actually realised ; for God had not become Incarnate, nor had He yielded Himself to become the Sacrifice. He could not therefore as yet exist under the visible forms of the offerings of the altar. Our Lord was gradually drawing near ; He was preparing for the great manifestation of Himself in the Flesh. But the Covenant with Israel, in this respect at least, was but a shadow. Real Life was not therein. " Grace and Truth," the very and real Substance of the Promise, was yet to come. The victim was not as yet the Living God Himself. To partake of the victim, was not, therefore, as it now is, to partake of God. The promises of Israel did not, and could not, extend, as our promises, to the partaking of " the Divine Nature." But in a peculiarly graphic and instructive way the sacrifice of the peace-offering prefigured and prepared the way for the great Eucharistic Service.

It has been already observed that there are three parts of the Eucharistic Mystery,—the Sacrifice, the participation, and the self-oblation in union with It. These three parts, though distinct, bear an intimate mutual relation one towards another, and together form the complete whole. God can be reached only through the memorialized Death of the Mediator. That around which we gather, as the seat of the Divine Presence on earth, is an Altar before it is a Table.

It is the place of Sacrifice, before it is the place of eating. This, the Oblation, is therefore the first stage of mystery, and on it the second stage depends. Participation follows in order that the accepted Life of the true Lamb of God enter within us, to become our own life. Participation in the sacrifice is that which completes the sacrifice, as the intended purpose and proper end of its being offered. Again, what we receive, when we communicate, we receive only in order to lead a life of self-oblation, a life like to His life Whom we receive, a life going forth and returning to the FATHER in perpetual self-sacrifice. Thus both the first and the third parts of the threefold mystery are alike vitally essential to its perfectness. But as evidently both alike look, the one forwards, the other backwards, to the Communion. The partaking is the turning-point of the completed grace. We sacrifice in order that we may participate. Having participated, we are pledged ourselves to become a sacrifice, to offer ourselves and our all to God.

We are therefore raised to a higher glory than the Israelite in respect of What we offer. They offered only the lower creatures' life. We offer the True Lamb. In a true sense in sacramental mystery we offer CHRIST, the very SON of GOD, to the FATHER. But it is not in this merely that we so greatly transcend the Israelite. We rise above his highest state of grace far more in *this*—that in our participation of the Sacrifice we partake of, we feed on, CHRIST, Who is our offering; and in partaking of His Humanity we partake, through His Humanity, of His Very GODHEAD. We become one with God by feeding on, by receiving into ourselves, Him Who is both God and Man. Our "exceeding great and precious promise" is, that our partaking is a

partaking "of the Divine Nature;" that our Exodus, our escaping the sinfulness of the world through lust, our offering on the restored Altar of sacrifice, sealed by the new Covenant, is followed, not only by the ascent of the Mount to eat *before* God, but even—amazing mystery of Love!—to eat *of* God. "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."¹

The indwelling of God within our renewed nature has been dwelt upon, as the special blessing of those who, having been redeemed by CHRIST, are made one with Him through partaking of His Sacrifice. To some it is a difficulty to realise in any measure the indwelling of God. But consider how the same difficulty exists with regard to all life. We touch and scrutinize the fresh green budding plant, instinct with exuberant life; but everywhere its life evades equally the grasp of the hand, or the perception of the mind. We stand before the living form amazed, perplexed; we pass away musing, wondering. The same law of the secrecy of life prevails everywhere around us. Probably one great part of the mysterious thrilling joy of the Future will be to look upon the inner workings and seats of life, and with an understanding heart. This insight, this perception of the presence of life is not yet given to us. Hitherto God has been pleased to interpose a thin, but perfectly impervious screen between our keenest gaze and the operations of life. We know by instinct that the living soul indwells, moves, gives expression and animation to, our living bodies; but what we see of its expression, is not the Soul itself; what we feel within of its energies is not the seat of its being, but only the bodily organ through which the spiritual

¹ S. John vi. 57.

presence lives and moves. If a Living Presence of a yet higher and more mysterious order than our soul connects itself with, lives and works within and through it, may we not suppose that such a life would be far more impalpable, still further removed from the possibility of sense, or of mental apprehension? The philosopher of old, when asked for a proof that he was alive, stamped upon the ground as his only reply. He meant to imply that action is the proof of life. The act of life alone can prove the existence of life. In like manner, though unable to comprehend or trace the workings of the Divine Presence, we believe that through the accepted Sacrifice we partake of the Being Whom we mystically offer, and Him to Whom we offer, and that the Being Whom we thus adore, is God. He dwells in us, and we in Him; He is one with us, and we with Him. We use the appointed means. We cannot doubt the promised result. But to search out and track the Eternal in the substance of our spiritual nature, is not given to us. He evades all our longing. "Verily Thou art a God, that hidest Thyself."¹ Yet as we know the sacramental means by which the Divine Nature enters in, and grows within us, even so we know on what moral conditions in ourselves its growth depends. As water, when clarified, separated off from all impure mixtures, becomes more and more lucent with the light of Heaven, which thus finds greater scope and freer play, and more luminous manifestations within its substance, thus also it is with our natural being. Purify it more and more, remove from it, casting far away, all remains of "the filthiness of the flesh and spirit," and then surely, although we may not see, though Angels may not be able to see, yet

¹ Isaiah xlv. 15.

God sees Himself in us. To the soul thus increasingly purified, God is more and more increasingly, more intensely, more luminously present, pervading us, abiding in us, filling us even with Himself.

Again, it has been already observed, that the service of the redeemed is, if true, an acceptable service. One great proof of this truth is to be found in the sacrificial system we have considered. There was in the peace-offering of Israel a satisfying of three distinct Persons, of God, of the mediating Priest, and of the worshipper. The three met in the common act, and found rest, and were satisfied. Now the peace-offering is the special and most characteristic type of the service which the redeemed offers, God being in him and he in God, through CHRIST the Mediator between God and man. Every true offering, therefore, of every one's true self, and all one has to offer, is a continually fresh expression of this satisfaction of God, and of man in God. Isaiah has said of our LORD ; "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."¹ The offered service of the redeemed, in whom He dwells, is the fruit which He desires to find of the travail of His soul. The FATHER has said of Him ; "This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased."² And if, as we offer the acceptable service of a life of sacrifice in CHRIST, we fulfil the desire of His Soul, and are in Him who is well-pleasing to the FATHER, and thus share His acceptableness, the result must be an unspeakably blessed and glorious reconciliation of mutual rest and delight in a united life and common acts, of all-absorbing fellowship, and joy unspeakable. More and more in an ever deepening truth, we thus "in Him live and move and have our being." For He, and all that He has won

¹ Isaiah liii. 11.

² S. Matt. iii. 17.

for us, becomes ours. His joy in the FATHER is ours. The FATHER's joy in Him is ours. It is a unity of life; and all that makes life precious, and all that pleases in the mutual interchange of living powers of love and joy, between the FATHER and the SON, are ours, who are in the SON, and through the SON are in the FATHER also. Our LORD's prayer, to be fulfilled in the day of His glory, is that we may be, in the utmost fulness of its possible accomplishment, "one" with Him, as "Thou, FATHER, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me, and the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are One."¹ Within that transcendent circle of rest will the rest of the Faithful be for ever. The Unity of the FATHER and the SON with the SPIRIT, is the Bosom of rest within which enfolded the accepted members of the SON enter as the result and proof of His acceptableness which embraces not Himself only, but all who are His. Behold! the repose of our wearied natures, the haven of the voyage over this troubled sea, the dwelling-place of the wanderer after his return and reception in his true Home. To Him in Whom this Life lives, to Whom this result is due, be all glory and praise. To His all entrancing Love be all love given. Unto Him Who hath called us, and hath made us partakers with Himself of these great and precious promises, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, be all glory and thanksgiving for ever. Amen.

¹ S. John xvii. 21, 22.

LECTURE V.

THE TRAINING OF THE ELECT.

DEUT. VIII. 2.

“AND THOU SHALT REMEMBER ALL THE WAY WHICH THE LORD THY GOD LED THEE THESE FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS, TO HUMBLE THEE, AND TO PROVE THEE, TO KNOW WHAT WAS IN THY HEART, WHETHER THOU Wouldest KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS OR NO.”

It has been hitherto the aim of these lectures to show the character and meaning of the chief sacrifices of the Old Covenant, and their correspondence with the Christian mysteries. We have seen how sacrifice is the means of access to God, and at the same time the expression of the life of the worshipper. Through sacrifice the worshipper stretches forth his hands and his heart to God, and thus obtains grace, while at the same time he pledges himself, presenting himself before God, as himself a living sacrifice in the same spirit in which he offers up the victim which represents him in the Divine Presence.

This may be called our devotional life. It consists of the services we offer within the sanctuary. It is the life of prayer and religious service. We have traced the progress of this life in its successive stages,—first the deliverance from death, next the offering of

our redeemed persons to God, and then our union with the Divine Nature. This order is complete so far as concerns the mysteries of the sanctuary, and our participation through them in the life of God.

It is necessary however, in order to complete the picture, to consider the training of the character, the inner discipline of the soul, and its development in harmony with this devotional life. A common experience teaches us that our spiritual condition, while engaged in the services of the sanctuary, may be quite at variance with our life under the actual trials and temptations of the world. And yet consistency between the two is absolutely necessary in order to constitute a real life before God. To obtain this consistency, we need the concurrent influences of a true communion with God in His ordained services and the discipline of life under the guidance of His Providence.

To this latter subject we must now turn, and we may still look to the Old Testament Scriptures for illustrations of this further truth. We may learn from them the principles of training in the saintly life, as before we learnt from it the principles of sacrifice.

The Book of Numbers, which details the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness, and the Book of Joshua, which records their settlement in the Holy Land, contain not merely annals of the early history of the chosen people, but also principles of life overruled by the Hand of God with the special object of moulding the people's character after His own purpose. In comparing these two books together, a striking difference is observable as to the condition of the people, their temptations and their sins. The former, the Book of Numbers, describes the history of the people in the earlier stage of its development; the latter, the

Book of Joshua, describes them in a more advanced stage of their spiritual life.

The history of the Israelites in the wilderness has always been regarded as a graphic picture of the early struggles of life. Their rebellious murmuring at every hardship; their constant tendency to accuse God of neglect or cruelty; their frequent desire to return back into Egypt; their reluctance to bear the weariness of the way towards the Holy Land; their lusting after the food and the revelries which they had left; their loathing the heavenly manna, and constant distrust of God,—these feelings manifested again and again in repeated instances during the wanderings of the wilderness are evidently most significant, and under the veil of historical events with singular vividness represent a mind not fully reconciled to God's guidance, undecided as to its course and aim, looking wistfully back to selfish ease and enjoyment, resenting and complaining of the trials of religion while yet constrained to submit to its commands, believing too much to be able to cast off its yoke, and yet loving the world and self too well to make religion a real life and joy.

The close of the wanderings in the wilderness was marked by a manifest change in the character of the people, the result of the long course of discipline to which they had been subjected. After their arrival at the Jordan we read no more of the desire to return to Egypt, nor any complaining at God's dealings; but rather a determined resolution to devote themselves to His service, a full acceptance of the Covenant, and a zealous giving themselves at any cost to strive for the conquest of the Holy Land. There is an honest, hearty determination manifest in the words with which the people respond to Joshua's appeal on his taking

the command of the host ; “ And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us, we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go.”¹

An improved character had been formed, and feelings were influencing them very different from those in which their fathers had gone forth from Egypt. Accordingly the faults of the Israelites after their entrance into the Holy Land, as well as the temptations to which they were exposed, widely differed from those exhibited in the wilderness. They are now tempted to over confidence in their own strength and knowledge, not looking enough to prayer and inquiring of God, as in the case of the deception of the Gibeonites, and the defeat at Ai ; or to sloth, as in settling down too easily and too quickly in their conquests, instead of contending against the enemies of God till they were wholly overcome ; or to forgetfulness of God in the hour of victory, and withholding from Him His due offering, as in the case of Achan and the Babylonish garment. The incidents which occur in this period of their course, represent under the veil of history an advanced development of life, while yet full of imperfections, the resolution to give up all to God, and yet falling short of the truth of its self-dedication, a defect in consistency of faith, in the spirit of prayer, in steady perseverance and laborious diligence, and the thought of the glory of God as a constant aim, while yet true in purpose, and stedfast in the primary articles of belief.

The history of the wilderness is that of persons, whose intentions are imperfect, and to whom trial is, as yet, a strange intolerable burden. The history of the times of Joshua is that of persons whose intentions are be-

¹ Josh. i. 16.

come sincere, while yet the lingering faults of the old nature render their fulfilment imperfect. The one was a constrained service, with constant weariness, and repeated rebellions, such as often mark the ordinary beginnings of an improved life. The other was a free and resolved service, but with an unchastened self, and manifold infirmities.

Such, speaking very generally, is the picture which the earlier Scriptures present of the gradual development of the elect people of God, when viewed as a whole, under the ordinary standard of life aimed at in the Mosaic Covenant.

But there were special trainings of certain chosen persons, leading them on to yet higher degrees of sanctity, and forming grander, holier, and more beautiful developments of spiritual life. The chief instance of this special greatness is found in Abraham. His is the first recorded instance of a human life trained under the immediate guidance of God. The history of his training and development is recorded with a peculiar care and fulness, because he was the commencement of the line from which CHRIST should at last arise. He is therefore the type of the discipline of a perfected humanity. Abraham was the morning star of the Incarnation, as we, if true to its risen life, are the "children of the Day."

Called from his father's home, and the associations and ties of early years, to go forth, "not knowing whither he went," to be ever afterwards a wanderer, having no certain dwelling-place; having no land, but only a burying-place; all the while invested with great promises on which to feed his soul's aspirations and high communion with the invisible world, yet waiting for their fulfilment till his heart must have grown sick, looking

for the child of promise, while feeling himself and his wife Sarah, as the long years passed, becoming as good as dead, and no sign appearing of the promised blessing ; the several members of his family gradually parted from him, and himself becoming more and more separate and alone,—such briefly is the tale of Abraham's earlier life. The object and effect of this training were evidently to subordinate to the will of God the yearnings of nature, the affections of the natural heart, the attachments to kindred and place, the impulses of sense and desire ; to lead him to live by pure faith, above nature, in the calm assurance of the guidings of God and anticipations of a blessed future, while continually sacrificing himself on the altar of an unquestioning obedience.

His faith reached its highest point in the sacrifice of his son Isaac. Beside other great purposes of this mysterious crisis of his history, one chief purpose is expressly revealed ; “ God did tempt,” i.e., test, “ Abraham.”¹ Was this merely to determine whether he was capable of being raised above the tenderest and purest natural yearnings, so as to make a complete surrender of thought and heart in unison with the will of God, and in trust upon Him ? There was indeed the repose of an unquestioning faith in surrendering the child of the promise to death, “ accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead.” And it was also the triumph of faith over all the acute sensitiveness of natural yearnings. But it was also intended to prove, in a yet finer sense, the complete weaning of his heart from all merely natural feelings that the pure consciousness of the supernatural, the Divine, might take their place, and prevail over all inward instincts.

¹ Gen. xxii. 1.

Isaac was equally the child of promise and the child of nature. There was consequently in Abraham's heart a divided feeling. The spiritual joy in the promised seed which was to bless the nations, and the parental affection for the offspring of his own body,—these together struggled within him. These divided attachments must have alternately swayed the bosom of the Saint. But if his faith, which was “accounted to him for righteousness,” was to be perfected, he must learn to view his son no longer according to the dictates of natural affection, but purely according to the law and affections of grace. He must give back his son to God by an act from which there could be no withdrawal, crucifying his natural clinging to him, that the parent may return to the state of pure faith in which he had walked with God before he received his child; and when this grace was wrought in him, then receive him back to possess him thenceforward only as the son of the promise, no longer the offspring of the flesh, the child of grace, not of nature. In the trial-hours of that agony of death, which, if his own hand did not actually deal to his child, his heart had accepted and willed to execute, there was developed in Abraham's soul this high state of pure selfless supernatural correspondence with the Divine purposes, the entire subordination of his own desires and will to the Will of the Supreme God. It was the crowning act of the long course of discipline, the actual attainment of the state which God had purposed to work in His servant. Then instantly flowed forth, as though touched by a sudden spring, the fulness of Divine blessing:—“By Myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multi-

plying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore ; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed My voice.”¹

We may take one more instance of the training of individual souls of a higher order for the attainment of a higher development of sanctity, one of a different kind, and exhibited in a person of a very different character. Jacob's was a far weaker nature than Abraham's, and stained with far greater sin. There was especially in Jacob a subtlety tending at times to actual deceit, and a self-reliance leading him to trust in merely natural schemes independently of God. The great sin of his early life was, that, instead of trusting God's promises to God Himself, he sought to compass them by schemes of his own devising. Unscrupulous often as to means, he would thus involve God in his deceits, causing Him to appear as the abettor and justifier of his sinful means of attaining righteous ends. Jacob's faith, earnestness, love, deep resolve, unswerving perseverance, in pursuing the promised blessing attached to his father's heritage, were unquestionable, and of the highest order ; but his natural confidence, and attachment to earthly schemings, needed to be broken down, and his subtlety of disposition to be done away ; and in their stead humility, and pure simple trust ever waiting upon God, to take their place.

The great change that marked the character of Jacob in his later, as contrasted with his earlier, years, may

¹ Gen. xxii. 16—18. The application of this remarkable blessing to the perfecting of Abraham's obedience is as important and unquestionable, as to the other and kindred view of the trial referred to in the last lecture. It therefore needed to be quoted under both its aspects.

be traced to the remarkable vision vouchsafed to him in the night after his return to the Holy Land, when he wrestled with the Angel.¹ Just before that vision occurred, Jacob's spirit had been profoundly stirred with anxious fears. His brother Esau was approaching, and when they last parted, he had sworn to wreak his vengeance and take his brother's life. He was now coming with a strong force. "Thy brother Esau cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him." Jacob was "greatly afraid and distressed." It was in this terror of dismay that he uttered that earnest prayer, the first of the kind recorded of him though he had passed through so many crises of fear and distress. "And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me; Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant, for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray Thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."² It was the prayer of a man who apparently for the first time fully felt all his natural strength break down in the face of a powerful foe; the utterance of a deep heart-moved conviction that his one and only real resource was in the mercy of God, in the power of the covenanted promises of His grace. As the night drew on, Jacob separated himself from his company, and he "was left

¹ Gen. xxxii.² Gen. xxxii. 9—12.

alone, and there wrestled a Man with him until the breaking of the day." Jacob at first supposed that the mysterious Adversary was but a man, and he put forth his full strength against him and wrestled with him, as though by his own natural power he could prevail. But God was in the visible form of the unearthly wrestler, and it was God's purpose to prove to His servant, that in his own strength he must fail, and only in the Divine aid overcome. All night that mysterious wrestling continued, even "until the breaking of the day." Neither would Jacob relax his own struggling grasp, nor would his Adversary yield to Jacob's efforts. It was Humanity refusing to acknowledge its own nothingness, and Deity waiting to implant this conviction. "When (the 'Man') saw that he prevailed not against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him." It was then, not till then, there broke in upon Jacob's soul the consciousness of the Presence before Whom he was standing, of Him against Whom he was contending. Then came an instantaneous change over the scene. The "Man" said, "Let Me go, for the day breaketh." But Jacob now fully perceiving Who the mysterious Warrior was, and seeing his own sin and his danger, a danger more terrible far than that which he had apprehended from his brother Esau—a Hand more mighty than he had ever yet felt pressing upon him, he turns to his God in simple trust; he has recourse to the plea of utter helplessness, to absolute dependence on the irresistible strength of prayer. "And he said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." Then it was that Jacob found, what God had taught him in that mysterious vision, that his true power, in which alone he could prevail, was in

faith and supplication. As before in Abraham's case, who by a true correspondence with the Divine Will in the closing trial of his life won his final blessing; so now to Jacob, when his soul was surrendered up to God in entire dependence, came the crowning blessing of his life. The unearthly Voice spoke, and inquired; "What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And He said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob,"—the old nature conversant with deceit and self-trust has passed away,—“but Israel,” a conqueror through the power of faith in God, “shalt thou be called; for as a Prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed And God blessed him there.” It was the sealing of Divine acceptance in the communication of a new power and hope, as the conviction arose and mastered his soul, that by pure faith the servant of God lives and prevails; that when he is weak, then he is strong.¹ “As Jacob passed over Penuel, the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.” It was an outward symbol to mark for

¹ Gen. xxxii. I have adopted Kurtz's explanation of this mysterious scene. He says:—“Our interpretation of this wrestling differs from that hitherto common in this—that we do not find the reason of the victory of Jacob over *JEHOVAH*, in the continuance of his bodily wrestling, as a symbol of spiritual wrestling, but that, on the contrary, we regard this very bodily wrestling as representing the perversity which had characterised his former life. The dislocation of his thigh constitutes the turning-point of the history. Formerly his wrestling had been bodily, but its continuation had become impossible when his thigh was out of joint. He now betakes himself to other weapons, and his wrestling becomes spiritual. These two kinds of wrestling, the one in his bodily strength, the other in the spiritual strength of prayer, are evidently opposed to each other; and Jacob prevails through the latter, and not through the former.”—*History of the Old Covenant*. Clark: Edinburgh.

ever the consciousness wrought triumphantly within him. He would walk thenceforth in the light of a truer knowledge of God, but with the fleshly frame, the natural self, yielded up, broken and overcome.

One special feature must be added characteristic of the more distinguished Patriarchs of Israel. They were taught, that the saintly life formed in them was not for themselves. The promises for which they lived, necessarily precluded the idea of life as centring in themselves. Every fresh endowment of their growing life was associated with the idea of living for others. Their calling was for the nations, for the world; for God to come, to be glorified in blessing all mankind. The powers and destinies of the life which was in them were a trust committed to them for the benefit of the whole creation of God. The salvation of the world was involved in their own spiritual elevation. To be channels of grace for the whole family of mankind was the very purpose which was continually set before them. To have nothing, except as holding it for others, was of the very essence of their own development. They could not think of themselves without thinking also of the world which, through them, was to be blessed. Their falls and defects of faith were the frustrating of the designs of God for the overthrow of the powers of evil in the fulfilment of the predestined glory which, in His Only Begotten Son, He had purposed from all eternity. Their faithfulness and their successes were as so many steps in the furtherance of those stupendous designs, preparing the way, and hastening the time, for the glorious manifestation of God in their very flesh.

The views of life on which we have dwelt under the

imperfect conditions of the Old Covenant are but types of higher realities in our greater nearness to God, our fuller possession of the Life of God. We, too, are taught in the New Covenant the twofold development and the twofold standard of spiritual life. "If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments," is our LORD's simple statement of the great truth, that a high unselfish fulfilment of the new law in subjection to God under the discipline of His Providence in the ordinary trials of life, is the true development of the regeneration which is the bestowal of the Divine Nature to every man alike who is called according to the purpose of God in his training for his future home in Heaven. And this training, which is necessary for all alike, has its progressive stages; its earlier periods, as of Israel in the wilderness, its strugglings against the discipline of God, and murmuring at each denial of the natural cravings for indulgence; its later periods after the acceptance of the gracious Will of God, and the promises of His love, but with the natural self too often mingling with the workings of His Spirit, and marring the victories of His grace, as with Israel in the Holy Land.

Moreover, a higher development of spiritual life, beyond the ordinary standard, manifests itself in the New, as in the Old, Covenant, as the more perfect expression of the Divine Presence and grace, raising still more above nature those whom He thus calls and draws by special inspirations, disciplines by special influences, fits for special fulfilments of His Will. This our LORD announced in the verses following the words just quoted which announce the law of life necessary to all. "Behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me

good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto Him, Which? JESUS said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness; Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?" And then our LORD answered—not giving to the inquirer, as might have been expected, an injunction to a more complete, more spiritual and self-sacrificing fulfilment of these high enactments of the Divine Law, not merely impressing on his mind an evangelical view of the depth and spiritual application of the moral code, and thus perfecting a weak and inadequate application of its true meaning,—but there fell on his startled ear, as the answer to his questionings, a call to sacrifice beyond all these first and essential requirements, raising his view and innermost nature, if he was able to bear it, nearer to his God, by a greater triumph over himself; an aspect of life, not new to the world, for the Patriarchs and a long line of the saints of Israel had witnessed to its truth and power, but new to the Israel of that day, new to its children in their then fallen state. "JESUS said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow Me."¹

There arose quickly as the true expression of this call of God in the New, as before in the Old, Covenant, manifold forms of devotion and self-sacrifice,—the forsaking "houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My Name's

¹ S. Matt. xix. 16—21.

sake,"¹ "to receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting;"² "the having no certain dwelling-place;"³ "the labour, working with our own hands;"⁴ the virgin life, choosing to be "as the Angels of God in heaven;"⁵ "the faith which can remove mountains;"⁶ the charity which could even be "accursed from CHRIST for my brethren;"⁷ and all these things "with persecutions;"⁸ all the while to be "as dying, and behold we live, as chastened and not killed, as sorrowful yet alway rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."⁹ These great developments of supernatural power in man, followed as the expression of the full purpose of the mind of CHRIST, as the higher aspects of the saintly life, as its special vocations in those who could receive them.

There has been formed, moreover, within the New, as in the Old Covenant, as the consequence of this higher development, a correspondingly advanced fitness and capacity for a higher communion with God. We have seen how to Abraham and to Jacob,—and the same grace was vouchsafed in numberless instances among the saints of Israel,—visitations of Angels, and manifestations of God, their own peculiar blessing, specially reserved to them, were from to time given, because in them alone was found a congeniality of mind, and preparation of heart, suited to the Divine intercourse. So in like manner there is reserved within the kingdom of the Incarnation, like special joys of a higher, nearer communion, for some than for others, although the callings of ordinary life are essential to the maintenance

¹ S. Matt. xix. 29.² S. Luke xviii. 30.³ 1 Cor. iv. 11.⁴ 1 Cor. iv. 12.⁵ S. Matt. xxii. 30.⁶ 1 Cor. xiii. 2.⁷ Rom. ix. 3.⁸ S. Mark x. 30.⁹ 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

of the world, and the will of God is to be worked out by every man in every state wherein he is called to abide with God. Although pure married life is, and must ever be, the earthly channel of the creation of the saints of God, and true Christian homes the nursery of their early development ; yet there is a union of thought and sympathy, and an inner fellowship between CHRIST and those whom He hath called to rise above the ordinary track of natural duties, which is specially their blessed heritage.

Our LORD's spirit could find a rest in Mary, which He could not find in Martha. He was drawn by a special friendship to S. John, which was denied even to S. Peter. The Virgin-born can still be served without distraction by the unmarried in a way hardly possible to the married, and the Son of Man Which is in Heaven even while on earth, can reveal more and more of heaven to the soul, as more and more of earth's fond ties are surrendered for heavenly love and ministries of mercy ; for a life wholly devoted to contemplation, to prayer, and union with the mind and work of CHRIST.

Once more, it must be added, that as in the Old, so now in the New Covenant, these supernatural gifts, these special endowments of the Spirit, are given to every man, not for himself, but "to profit withal" for the good of others,—not to cause distinctions, exalting one above another, but for the edifying of the Body of CHRIST ; for they which live, and therefore more especially they that live the higher forms of life, should "no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him Which died for them, and rose again." And as the first and noblest saints of the old Covenant lived more in being a blessing to "the nations of the earth," than for their

joy in God, even so they also in whom are manifested the higher developments of Christian faith and love and self-sacrifice, the brighter stars studding the luminous atmosphere of the milky way of the Christian hemisphere, shine out, not to rejoice in the kindling of their own fires, but “for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years, for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon earth ;” to be like the angels whom they emulate, while “always beholding the Face of their FATHER Which is in Heaven,” at the same time “ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.”¹

There is then a discipline of life, as there is a sacramental grace of life. To the great mass of mankind, to almost all the poor of CHRIST, the discipline of the Providence of God in the circumstances and order of the world, forms of necessity the main agency which is at work to develop their renewed nature. Such discipline is to them, in a great measure, in the stead of Sacraments, fulfils the work of Sacraments, causing their life to be the exercise of a perpetual self-sacrifice, while they minister in the courts without, with comparatively infrequent access to the inner offices of the sanctuary. But there is in such cases no difference of principle, only a question of degree. To none, not even to those who live the life of highest contemplation and most frequent communion, can the training of outward circumstances be dispensed with. Rather it is as essential as the grace of sacraments, more constant in its operation, more frequent in its demands, and often harder in its requirements. This is the reason why home life, even the world's life, is so influential in the

¹ Heb. i. 14.

growth of character, so continually developing, even under what seems a state barren of spiritual privileges, such high and often surprising forms of sanctity.

The same principle explains the fact that in the cloister there is such need of a controlling discipline and the pressure of a constant outward rule. Nowhere can this law of the order of the Providence of God be set at nought. Even the spirit of contemplation and prayer requires its chastening influences to check their possible unhealthy tendencies, to give them practical vigour, reality and self-restraint; to teach self-sacrifice and the subdual of the will.

One practical caution needs to be added. It is common to suppose that a passive acquiescence in the trials of life is the fulfilment of their intended end. On the contrary, it is their least important result. The real gain to be obtained through the discipline of God in any appointed trial, depends on an active co-operation with it. The will must be conformed, as well as subdued. It must unite with God, not merely yield to God. A true living union rests on co-operation, not on submission. To infuse into the soul in every trial the lesson it would teach, the spirit of sacrifice it involves, or the self-denial it would elicit, or the secret conquest of temper, or the increasing earnestness of faith, or the sweetness of patience, or the largeness of love, which it is intended to mature, as the needed advance in the progressive development of the soul's life—this is the result which is contemplated, not merely that the soul of the redeemed should learn to live in passive obedience to an irreversible will.

Union with God in mind and action is the end alike of the grace of sacraments, and of the discipline of life. And the tending to this end under the influence

of the holy Light which ever guides us on, depends on a constant readiness of the will to coalesce with the expressions of the will and purpose of God. The constant yielding of affection and desire to the changing circumstances of the Providence of God is the condition which His grace demands for accomplishing His purpose in us. To yield oneself as the will of God is revealed with a willing inclination; to bear all the cost of the sacrifice with an affectionate cleaving to God, as He reveals Himself in His own chosen course; to live in rest upon the assurance that He will make all work together for good to them that thus love Him—this is the secret animating principle of the soul which is conforming itself to His mind Who revealed in Himself the perfectness of our nature, and Who would speak for all who are His, as for Himself, when He said, “I come to do Thy will, O God; I am content to do it; yea, Thy law is within My heart.” It is the inward assent, the moulding of the heart, the secret constant acceptance of His will, the thankful conformity to His perfect mind, as in His inward revelations of Himself or His Providence it is made known to us,—this marks the likeness, and sets upon us the seal by which in the great day of account we shall be owned and accepted of Him for ever in the “manifestation of the sons of God.”

LECTURE VI.

REST IN GOD.

ISAIAH LXII. 1.

“FOR ZION’S SAKE WILL I NOT HOLD MY PEACE, AND FOR JERUSALEM’S SAKE I WILL NOT REST, UNTIL THE RIGHTEOUSNESS THEREOF GO FORTH AS BRIGHTNESS, AND THE SALVATION THEREOF AS A LAMP THAT BURNETH.”

THE object of the foregoing lectures, has been to trace out in the typical ritual and history of Israel the deliverance of redeemed humanity through CHRIST, and the life which is the true consequence of such redemption. It was shown, first, how the ransomed soul rises by means of death into life, innocent sacrificial death having power through some mysterious unknown law to overcome and do away guilty death. As day by day we “bear about in our body the dying of the LORD JESUS,”—the law of death already accepted, though to be perfectly fulfilled only in our last passage through the veil into the inconceivable light beyond, when our present fleshly state shall have passed away as it died in Him,—even so “the life also of JESUS,” already begun, “is made manifest,” manifest in some faint degree even “in our mortal,” but to become manifest

how much more completely and triumphantly hereafter in our immortal, "body."¹

We next considered the life arising out of the shroud of death, the ransomed life of the redeemed, which is sustained and increases through God's indwelling Presence, and is united to Him by a threefold cord. Two links of this chain of life, moreover, have been traced. One link, represented by the burnt-offering of the Levitical law, is the spirit of sacrifice, which expresses itself in two ways, distinct but harmonious,—the offering of what God has sanctified through the ministrations of His sanctuary, and the moral sacrifice of self-oblation perfected under the discipline of His Providence. The second link represented by the peace-offering of the Levitical law, is the communion which follows the sacrifice, the feeding together of God and the redeemed soul; and, as the consequence, the Divine Nature pervading, uplifting, transubstantiating the human into His likeness.

The third link of this threefold cord, is now to be considered as the fitting close of our subject. This third link is the power of prayer.

The necessity of prayer rests on the mysterious fact, that between us and God an obstacle exists, which has to be surmounted; that God requires to be inclined, or moved favourably towards us, by this means which Himself has ordained for this end. It has been already shown how the power of death, as a dark material shroud, lay on the face of fallen humanity, and needed to be destroyed in order to our redemption. In like manner,—though we cannot as yet know the causes or reasons of the mystery which lie far beyond the reach of human experience, or divine revelation,—

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 10.

there are still interposing hindrances in the intercourse between God and the soul, even when redeemed, which have to be overcome. There is still need of effort to be exerted to win the blessed results of this great redemption, of force to be brought to bear on the outgoings of the Divine Nature. It is not that the Nature of God can be changed, nor yet that any influence can affect Him except according to His own Will ; but that His purpose is, to be moved favourably, or not, towards man, according as we pray to Him.

The chapter of Isaiah from which the text is taken, is founded on this truth. It speaks of a glory to be developed in our ransomed and renewed nature, and of a delight in our union with God, of which the fondest natural ties are but earthly shadows. The words throughout imply that the Prophet looked to God of His pure grace to kindle this light of His glory within us, and develop this new spiritual life. And then further he adds, that this work of grace depends on an influence to be exercised on God by the earnest pressure of prayer, and that this influence is to be continually kept up, nor suffered to rest, till God has been overcome by the persevering effort, and has granted the desire.

The chapter opens with the assertion of this consciousness of the power of prayer : " For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." The promised recompense is then declared : " Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more

be termed Forsaken ; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate. But thou shalt be called Hephzibah, (delightful,) and thy land Beulah, (married,) for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin so shall thy sons marry thee ; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride,"—the keenest natural joy is selected by the Spirit as the fittest type of the blessedness of the spiritual union,—“ so shall thy God rejoice over thee.” And then again is urged the power of prayer, and the necessity of its unwearying energy. “ I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night ; ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” The margin supplies another version of one portion of this last passage. Instead of “ ye that make mention of the LORD,” the parallel expression is, “ ye that are the LORD’s *remembrancers*.” The term strongly represents the action of prayer on the mind or memory of God, its reality in bringing before God an idea or desire, and the pressing it upon Him ; and this declared to be an absolute necessity and condition of success.

In this revelation we see described the third link of our union with God. Without it we are still separate from Him. There may be the purest offering brought to the altar. The sacrifice may be duly made. But it cannot rise, it can have no place among heavenly existences, it cannot enter the Heart of God, cannot affect His mind, cannot have its part in the life of God, unless it be wafted upwards on the wings of prayer, wafted as the utterance of the suppliant soul by an impulse of the desires of love,

seeking ardently to find its rest in the Eternal, the Infinite Godhead.

There was in the Temple of Jerusalem a visible manifestation of this vital truth. For fifteen hundred years a most impressive symbolic testimony was presented to the minds of men of the mysterious power of prayer. I speak of the altar of incense.¹ This altar was placed at the uppermost end of the Holy Place, nearest to the Holiest Place, just outside the vail which parted the Holy from the most Holy, and therefore farther in than the altar of Burnt-offering, which was in the court, "before the door of the tabernacle,"² or Holy Place. On entering the temple there was first the altar of sacrifice, then the altar of incense, and lastly the Shekinah, the Divine Presence, on the mercy-seat between the cherubim over the ark of the Covenant.

The position of the altar of incense was expressly ordered: "Thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee."³ Its preciousness appeared in this—that it was covered with pure gold, while the altar of sacrifice was covered with brass; "Thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof, and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about."⁴

Year after year, during the entire period of the Mosaic covenant, twice every day, every morning when the Priest dressed the lamps, he was to burn sweet incense thereon, and every evening when he lighted the lamps at even, he was to burn incense upon it.

¹ See Exod. xxx. 1—6, and xl. 5, 26, 27.

² Exod. xl. 6.

³ Exod. xxx. 6.

⁴ Exod. xxx. 3.

As with the daily burnt-offering, so with the daily incense, the fire of the morning offering was laid on the yet smoking incense of the evening, that of the evening on the yet kindled fire of the incense of the day. It was to be, as the Scripture said, "a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations." But the most momentous truth to be noted in reference to the mystery is this, that the "sweet savour" of the burnt-offering could only pass into the Presence of God through and by means of the sweet odour of the incense. The altar of the burnt-offering and the altar of incense were in the same line leading up to the Divine Presence, but the altar of incense was the nearest; it was between the altar of burnt-offering, and the Presence. As the flame of the continual burnt-offerings sent up its waves of light circling vapour to diffuse themselves throughout the Holy Place, they passed towards the Holiest Place, and on their passage mingled with the smoke of the incense rising yet nearer to the innermost shrine, and then borne upon its ascending stream were carried through the veil into the very Holiest of all by its means, the incense-borne savour of the sacrifice penetrating into the secret Presence, where no human foot trod, save that once a year the typical High Priest entered, symbolising the Ascension of our LORD; undisturbed by human voice, unseen by human eye, save on that one solemn day of Atonement. The stream of incense bearing the sweet savour of the sacrifice hovered around the Holy Light above the mercy-seat, rested on it, unceasingly mingled with it, became one with it. It was a manifest symbol of the power of prayer, first, and above all of the prayer of the great Intercessor, ever standing before the Eternal Throne, and next, of all prayer offered in and

through His intercession. It symbolised the prevailing power of perpetual prayer, reaching the inner Heart of Deity, surrounding, pervading the Divine Presence, the incense wreaths of prayer circling above, around, the Living God, Who abiding above the mercy-seat is thus pressed on every side, on one side by His own Covenant and promises of mercy, on the other by the suppliant voices of His Redeemed, the predestined sharers of the glory of His SON, His Beloved.

Prayer was thus shown to be the vehicle of sacrifice, its bearer into heaven, the means by which propitiation reaches and overcomes the Heart of God. Through its power of entrance into Heaven, the life which it bears upward becomes a real divine existence, thus obtaining a place and part in the life of Heaven.

To enter into the truth of this new life, we need to embrace and follow two simple principles. (1.) All, even the least events of the most common-place course are the materials of the daily offering of God's redeemed ones, because they are, one and all of them, separately and conjointly, expressions of the Divine Will, and form the scene, the occasions and the mode of our probation under its influence. Events, whether bright or sad, painful or easy, burdensome or joyous, trifling or momentous, nevertheless all alike, one as much as another, are to be lived in, as manifestations of that holy and perfect Will, are to be done or borne, as replete with the opportunities of a life of grace, and as means of conformity to the mind of CHRIST which is to be fulfilled in us. This is one momentous principle. To ignore it, to put it aside, is to deny a particular Providence, to destroy the unity of the Divine purposes in guiding the issues of our redeemed nature. To accept it, is to hold in our hands the clue

to the whole practical secret of our spiritual advancement through the discipline of the Providence of God, of turning all expressions of His will into means of spiritual progress.

(2.) With this, the first, we must needs join the second, and truly kindred principle. These details in which our daily life is cast, are designed to be the subject matter of prayer, as they are also the materials of sacrifice, the separate victims of a life ever offered in all its parts in constant expressions of desire and fervent homage to God. They form the substance of the incense which morning and evening, throughout the day, throughout the night, are to rise before the Holy Presence. By offering all we desire, or think, or do, we are feeding the flame of the perpetual incense of the Covenant, and our life thus offered becomes transferred from earth to heaven, from the outer court to the innermost secret shrine, there to live for ever in the remembrance, in the Heart of God.

Connected with the altar of incense in the Temple of Israel, there was another symbol of a yet higher result, of a yet more complete acceptance of the persons of the redeemed, and of their offerings. Near to the altar of incense stood the table of shew-bread. Like the altar of incense, it was overlaid with pure gold. "Thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about."¹ It was furnished and decked in all respects as a table for a guest. There were upon it dishes, and spoons, and covers, and bowls to cover the table, all "of pure gold shalt thou make them." In the stillness of that secret

¹ Exod. xxv. 23—30.

place, beyond the court into which alone the people were admitted, close to the mercy-seat, the seat of the Divine Presence, only parted from it by the vail outside which it stood day and night for successive ages, through all the period of the existence of the Mosaic Covenant, that table was set, prepared for the Unseen Guest, or rather the Master of the place, where He invisibly should feed. On this table were set in order every Sabbath day the twelve loaves of shew-bread, the food of the Invisible God within His own abiding place. But the bread was not placed there alone, it was always united with the incense; "Thou shalt set the loaves in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD, and thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD."¹

The twelve loaves manifestly represented the twelve tribes of Israel. The loaves were made of fine flour which the people themselves had offered, to become thus materials to compose the food of God. "Every Sabbath" the priest "shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant."² The people, every tribe, and in each tribe each individual of the tribe, had his share in offering the fine flour of which this bread of God was to be made. But only when the pure frankincense, the emblematic symbol of prayer, was put on it, the offering was complete. It was then, as the Scripture says, "most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute."³ The shew-bread when overlaid with the incense, was the representation before God in His

¹ Levit. xxiv. 6, 7.

² Ibid. 8.

³ Ibid. 9.

secret place of abode, of the whole people of God sanctified by, instinct with, prayer. Their persons, and all they could offer, the faithful themselves, and all they had of faithful service, united with the ever offered prayer, became the food of God, abiding continually in His Presence.

As in the burnt-offering each one of the Faithful, though far away, was in the Temple being consumed in the flames of the oblation,—wherever he wandered, still ever there represented morning after morning, evening after evening,—even so in the shew-bread, the yet higher mystery, each one by a like representation was taken up nearest to the inmost Presence, each one member in every tribe presented before God, and laid, and ever lying spread out before Him, to become the delightful food of the Unseen, the ever present God, even in His Holy Place. This table of God was to the Israelite the symbol of the complete blessedness of their offered, their sacrificed life. It was the assurance to every one of his acceptance already secured, of his translation to the highest innermost sphere of life, of the delight which God had in him, of his presence and rest in the Divine Heart, of his presence in God as a satisfying food, even as himself below feeding on the sacrifice which he had offered to Him on His altar, became, even under the earlier dispensation in some imperfect degree at least, a partaker of Him Whom he adored, as the perfected result of the accepted sacrifice.

When we consider that these provisions of the Jewish Temple were no mere imaginings of the gifted Prophet ; but were made carefully “after the patterns of heavenly things showed to Moses in the mount,” they set before us a conviction, beyond what words can express,

of the greatness of redeemed human life when truly offered to God, of the worth of human sacrifice when duly made, of what redeemed man is, and may become, with God; of the completeness of the union of the human with the Divine, of the marvellous mutual incorporation, the marvellous mutual feeding and assimilation of each in the other's life, the satisfying in each of a real hunger.

To the Israelite indeed all this was comparatively at least but a symbol, or but very partially a reality of grace.¹ But to us it is not so; for the shadows have fled away. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST."² Under these symbols therefore we have before us the aspect of our present life having reached its highest point of development, a glory that can indeed be perfected only hereafter, but which exists in a measure even now as we are on earth; a glory which faith anticipating beholds as already possessed, commencing with the presentation of our ransomed souls and bodies, and the offering of our everyday life disciplined under the Providence of God, instinct with an indwelling grace of hidden Deity, united with the One availing Sacrifice for the world, translated and uplifted by prayer, and laid before God, not merely to be contemplated by Him, but to be fed upon, to be delighted in, to become an unceasing object of rest and satisfaction to the Everlasting, within His own inscrutable Being, as food passes into our substance and becomes one with it.

¹ Mr. Freeman argues with great weight of reason for the real, though imperfect effects of the ordinances of the Levitical law of sacrifice, in opposition to the view ordinarily taken, that they were simply typical.

² S. John i. 17.

We may here pause,—but before closing the last of this series of lectures, I would, though it can only be cursorily, consider some of the chief outward hindrances which meet us in carrying out in practical reality the principles of life which we have surveyed in theory.

The world presents the first hindrance, meeting us in the opening of our course, and lasting even to the end. Its vastness, its compactness, its imperial sway, its assumed infallibility, its remorseless and resistless force, its presence penetrating everywhere even into the most retired homes, its compassing us about in every movement, its state and grandeur, its plausibility, its dazzling brilliancy, its intense excitement, its unwearied zeal in enlisting in its cause intellect, beauty, affection, passion, expediency, ease; and (still more fearful power!) its falling in so triumphantly with every human weakness, passion, folly, desire; its unceasing readiness to gratify self in every form,—all this gives to the world, its traditions, its proverbs, its assertions, an advantage which has ever made it, next to our own rebellious deceitful hearts, the chief source of peril to the redeemed. It is not, however, of the grossness of the world's sin, or the craving of its ambition, or the grasp of its covetousness, that I would here speak, so much as of its stealthier, its more specious forms of seduction, which seem less evil in appearance or in individual detail, but yet are as fatal in their possible results. The softening away all high religious ideas under the plea of extravagance or unreality; the constant suppressing of all definiteness of truth under the fear of being extreme; the bringing natural affections and natural duties into such an overwhelming preponderance in the scale against the impulses of the religious instincts, and even of the Divine vocations; the magnifying of the things

of the mere passing hour to the detriment of things eternal, and of conventional courtesies to the setting aside of the simplicity of truth,—how constantly are such influences at work gradually sapping away and deteriorating a once holy zeal, or accommodating to lower aims a once pure heavenly love. How surely moreover do these influences co-operate within the soul itself with its own natural infirmities, shrinkings, fears, and the constant pressure tending downwards of the lower self ever ready to yield to the supposed necessity, or the seemingly unanswerable excuse. Yet worse again and more fatal is the supposed success which the world claims in reconciling earnest religion, frequent communions and daily services, with the old frivolities and love of pleasure,—the double life, of fervent offerings within the sanctuary, and eager seeking after natural excitement or gay or vacant self-indulgence, thus at the same time satisfying or seeming to satisfy the craving after God by a partial surrender of time and thought, which costs little, and to sanctify, or at least neutralise the evil of, the old tastes and desires of the natural self, so as to lull the conscience, and yet spare the necessity of effort and self-sacrifice,—the easy and outwardly decorous habits which so often thrive in the perfumed atmosphere of a fashionable religion.

How surely, how fatally, do such influences tend to depress and check the development of heavenly aspirations, the goings forth of supernatural power, the apprehension of unseen things, the elements of a life of pure faith and divine love! The hindrances which such influences raise up, though presenting themselves in petty details, and quickly passing incidents, can nevertheless be met and overcome only by

a firmness and endurance of trial like, if not equal, to the faith which sustained the confessors of earlier days,—a texture of soul such as Holy Scripture bids us cherish, when it warns us, that “the world still lieth in wickedness,”¹ and that “all who will live godly in CHRIST JESUS must suffer persecution.”²

2. Another hindrance peculiar to ourselves, arises from the proximity of the Church of Rome. It could not but be expected, that a body so powerful, so closely pressing upon us, and alas! so opposed to us, should exercise a great influence on the mind. I do not here speak of its power in drawing from our side some whom we can ill spare, and whose parting from us is full of pain, to whom Rome’s peculiar system seems so specially attractive,—but rather of the continual fears which it excites in so many as to the tendencies of all sacramental teaching; of the reaction it causes against higher views of life and devotion than are common among us, because of their supposed hopeless identification with what is rightly deemed error. How constantly is high doctrine, while acknowledged to be Catholic and of primitive and patristic authority, as e.g. concerning the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacrifice of the Altar, the Priesthood, or the Ordinance of Confession,—rejected, or shunned, or at least discouraged, because it is found difficult to distinguish the truth on such questions from certain additions, or developments, against which we are bound to protest. And as it is with doctrine, so also with principles of life. Have we not cause for regret and anxiety, because high views of self-sacrifice, and desires of self-devotion rising above ordinary domestic duties and vocations in the world, the mystic

¹ 1 S. John v. 19.

² 2 Tim. iii. 12.

graces of virginity, or poverty, the permanent self-consecration to the love and imitation of CHRIST in a course of service, separate from all earthly ties, the life of contemplation and continual prayer, the spending and being spent in spiritual works of mercy, the choice perhaps of loneliness for heavenly companionship, of temporal loss for eternal treasures,—because such aspirations are hindered and opposed, sometimes even quenched and ruined, out of mere misapprehension and confusion arising from the habit of viewing such aims only in connexion with abuses which we rightly deplore, and thus rejecting, it may be, the very inspirations of the HOLY GHOST, or at least stinting His gracious movements within the souls of His elect?

How are such hindrances to the progress of true religion to be overcome, unless, while stedfastly witnessing for the truth, for its soberness and simplicity, and for the faithful loyal observance of our own fixed principles, we at the same time cherish an intensely earnest watchfulness for the guidings of the SPIRIT of GOD abiding in us; a sincere reverence for all that ever professes to be, or may be, of GOD, lest we be found fighting against Him, and an assurance that whatever is eternal must be greater than what is temporal, whatever is unseen more precious than what is seen; a confidence in our own portion of the Church, as possessing powers of development of grace, to meet the real cravings of all devout minds, power of adapting to itself, and making its own, all that is holy, all that is great; the putting away prejudice, fear, mere antagonism, or groundless suspicions, and casting ourselves trustfully and lovingly wherever Holy Scripture, and primeval example point the way, believing that the Gift of Pentecost with all Its manifold diversities of life

is imperishable, and undecayed ; that it is not limited to the narrow channel of a single Apostolic See, however venerable, but has its Presence in the Body of the Church, and in all its members, binding us now, as at the beginning, and as straitly, to uphold the truth and the callings of GOD at any cost in their fulness equally as in their simplicity, not counting our lives dear to us, so that we “ may finish our course with joy, and the ministry which we have received of the LORD JESUS, to testify the Gospel of the grace of GOD.”¹

3. Once more. The unbelief, or unrestrained scepticism, which is everywhere around us, which even when not fully prevailing, or acknowledged, yet lurks beneath the lax indifference to truth, the questioning as to dogma, the resistance to all authoritative teaching, so characteristic of the present aspect of opinion, this vague liberalism has a direct tendency to lower the tone of practical life, to disparage high aims, and to reduce vocations of the HOLY GHOST to the same uncertainty which besets doctrine. There is the closest possible connexion between faith in the outward, and faith in the inward, revelations of the Spirit ; between definiteness of truth, and distinctive vocations of life. Scepticism always tends downwards, and settles upon lower and lower views, till mere reason supplies the principles, to which alone the mind submits. A corresponding tendency as to practical points resents every aim of life above its own, and sinks to the level of mere natural morality, because the natural apprehension becomes the standard by which everything is at last tried. When miracles are easily set aside even in the case of our LORD, it is no wonder that lives of

¹ Acts xx. 24.

supernatural grace in His elect, which soar above the ordinary standard of the world, are readily discountenanced as extravagant and deluded. When our LORD's own Divine life is become a matter of dispute, still more may we expect such incredulity to question the claims of a Divine life in His servants.

And how can this hindrance be removed, but by much prayer for ourselves, and for our brethren, that the gift of faith may be increased, the love of truth and the consciousness of the Invisible be restored ; that, as it was in the days when the foundations of the Church of God were laid by those into whose labours we have entered, so we may be revived through the fresh outpouring of the Spirit promised to the Church in her latter days. And most surely the same grace is to be looked for now, as of old. Time lessens not the wondrous work of God, nor diminishes His fulness. The river that flows from beneath the Throne of God flows on still, refreshing the Holy City as of old. "The LORD's Hand is not shortened, that He should not save, neither His ear heavy, that He should not hear." But God waits for His "remembrancers," for the pleading of the eternal Sacrifice, for the pressure of the prayer of faith ; and He will surely "because of our importunity" yet again revive us in the midst of our days, for "even unto your old age I am He, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you."¹ It is the effect of passing time to dull the freshness of the first lights of faith, and relax the earnestness of first impressions. But God changes not, nor is the lapse of time known in Heaven. Life is there an everlasting present, and the outgoings of the Spirit are to-day as they were at the beginning. The glory of our LORD is to us the

¹ Isa. xli. 4.

everlasting, unvarying assurance of the undiminished fulness of His love and the power of His grace. Only we need increased faith and rest in this assurance; we need a more perfect trust in the fulfilment of His promises. We need to rise above the distractions, and constraints of outward things; above our own scruples and fears, casting ourselves more simply, more unreservedly upon God, upon the powers of the world to come. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail. But they that wait on the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."¹

¹ Isa. xl. 28—31.

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